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GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

VOL. I.



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G R E A T T O M

OF

O X F O R D.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“PETER PRIGGINS,” &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

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GREAT TOM OF OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Voce summâ resonans.

HORACE.

It was on a cold winter's night, about the middle of January, in the year 18—, that I, Mr. Suum Cuique, found myself and my luggage (one portmanteau and a box of books) lifted off the roof of the Oxford fly-coach, and deposited at Tom gateway. I was about to enter the University, Christchurch College, and my rooms at one and the same time. I had already been matriculated, and paid my fees and my respects to the Vice-chancellor. I found the latter proceeding, I must confess, much easier and far less expensive than the

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former ; though I had not so heavy a sum to pay as many who were matriculated with me, because I was about to enter on my college career as a servitor—they call them sizars at Cambridge — whereas those around me were some noblemen, some gentlemen commoners, and others commoners. I did not, of course, then know the exact distinction between these ranks ; but, having been educated at a country grammar-school, and consequently imbued with some learning, I gathered enough from the various phases of the Vice-chancellor's face, and from the varied amount of fees paid at the table of the Apodyterium, to convince me that there *was* a distinction, and that the study of the *red*-book had interfered with, if not superseded, that of the black-letter volumes in the University.

I remember well that both the coachman and the guard, when they had deposited me and my luggage, and kicked at the gate to let the porter know some one craved admittance, made me a sort of demi-bow, and touched the brim of their hats. I returned the salute as gracefully as I could, and turned into college

through the small portal in the huge gates, which the college Cerberus had opened for my admission.

I was gazing, by the solemn light of a January moon, on the solemn scene before me, and wondering why a leaden statue of Mercury in the middle of the Quadrangle should be throwing cold water on the air on such a cold night, when I heard my driver say to the porter,

“That ere’s a downright shabby.”

“Not so much of a screw as a dead nail,” added the guard, as he dropped the deal box containing my classics, with an evident intention of smashing its uncorded sides.

“What! ain’t he stood handsome?” inquired the porter, in tones betokening the height of amazement.

“Handsome?” cried both coachman and guard; “vy, he ain’t stood nuffin at all!”

“Not tipped?” shouted Cerberus in still more energetic tones.

“No; not even a tanner, though we tipped him the usual signs,” said the guard.

“ And I’ve had the care of his precious carcase for up’ards of fifty mile,” said the coachman.

“ And I of his luggidge over the worst ground in the kingdom,” added the guard.

“ Let’s see who he is,” cried the porter, as he rushed into his lodge, and brought out a candle and lantern. He turned the box up so as to get a glimpse of the name upon it ; and, in a tone which vacillated between contempt and pity, said, “ He’s only a servitor, poor devil !”

“ What, a sort of charity-boy, like, eh ?” said the driver.

“ Exactly,” said the porter ; “ carries in the first dish, and eats what’s left of the last ; but I’ll make him tip for the honour of our house.”

So saying, he advanced towards me ; and, in a more respectful manner than I could reckon upon, he suggested to me — “ the servitor, poor devil ” — that it was customary to present to the driver and guard of a coach a gratuity in addition to the amount of the fare.

I returned to the gates, and by the light of his lantern contrived, though my hands were benumbed by the cold, to extract from my pockets all the silver I had, which consisted of three bright shillings new from the Mint of King George the Third. I was about to bestow one of them on each of the applicants, when, to my great surprise, the driver said,

“No, thank ye, sir; the vill’s as good as the deed. Come along, Villiam, ve isn’t so bad off in the world as to deprive a poor young chap of a few ’ogs as was evidently given to ’im by ’is poor mother at partin’.”

“Not upon no consideration whatsomdever, Tom,” replied the guard. “I’d be pison’d fust.”

So, with a respectful good night, and wishing me good luck, they returned to their coach, leaving me not a little surprised at their unexpected considerateness, and humbled at the thought that my poverty should thus be made known on the first day of my appearance in college. The porter, too, held his lantern to my face, and I felt he was examining my looks. He doubtless saw the blush

of shame that mantled over my cheeks, and it seemed to have a due effect upon him; for, as he turned the key in the lock, he said, in kindly tones that went to my heart,

“ You would be glad to go to bed, sir? The servants are all gone out of college, but I will light you to your rooms, and bring your luggage up for you.”

I thanked him; for though I was hungry I was cold and sleepy, and wanted warmth and repose more than I did a supper, for which I was afraid to ask.

He took up my portmanteau, and, turning to the left, preceded me up the first staircase, observing, as he mounted the stairs, “ The rooms are comfortable enough, sir, but rather noisy until you get used to them.”

Of course I could not tell what he meant, as everything was as still as death *then*; and when I had entered my rooms, which were close to the tower over the gateway, I found them snugly furnished, and a fire burning in the grate, which, under the skilful poking of my guide, quickly sent forth a cheerful blaze. Candles were speedily lighted; and,

to my great joy, I found some cold meat and bread put out for me ; a kettle placed on the hob ; and a bottle of something which my guide told me was gin, which my provident scout had procured upon the chance of my being in want of something cheering after my cheerless journey.

When he had shown me my bedroom—which was a mere closet under the tower—the porter left me to myself. I felt as if I was alone in the world ; and when I gazed round me and missed the faces of my mother and sisters, my father and brothers, from whom I had never before been separated for any length of time, I burst out into tears which I could not control, and wished that I had not been so successful a scholar as to draw upon me the attention of the gentleman who had solicited and procured for me the small pittance which was to enable me to receive a university education. I was *very* wretched ; but the brightness of the fire, the tempting appearance of the little supper, and the singing of the kettle on the hob, reminded me that I was master of everything around me,

and hungry withal. I fell-to with an appetite that an alderman would envy ; and, after clearing the decks of all the solids, proceeded to do—what I had never done before—make myself a glass of grog. Whether I was or was not a judge of the proportions used in compounding gin-toddy, I cannot say, but I certainly succeeded in manufacturing a goblet of half spirit and half water, with a considerable quantity of sugar in it, which seemed to send the blood thrilling to the extremities of my body, and drove out all thoughts of a gloomy nature as to my future career.

After gazing at the fire for some ten minutes, and seeing in the bright coals bright forms of faces at home, and bright prospects of academic honours, I felt a degree of somnolency come over me which I had never experienced before. I managed to undress myself and creep into bed somehow or another, but how I cannot even now say. The effect of my long journey, through the cold open air, upon the top of a heavy-jolting vehicle, and the unwonted stimulus of a strong tumbler of spirits and water, combined to send me off

instantaneously into a deep and half-apoplectic sleep. I am not at all aware how long I had slept before I was awakened by a noise like the grating movement of some large ill-oiled machinery, and the sound of something that seemed like a giant hammer falling on the ceiling of my room, which appeared to be formed of some deeply-sonorous, metallic substance. "Bom, bom, bom!" — the very air seemed to vibrate with the sound; my bed shook under me; and the very walls, and the chairs and tables, seemed to be suffering from an incipient earthquake!

I sprang out of bed, and rushed into my sitting-room. After tumbling over the chairs, and running against the table and sofa, I contrived to find my way to the outer door. I opened it with some little difficulty, for I was unacquainted with the management of an oak-door lock, and listened at the top of my staircase: all was still as death; and, as the passage lamp was out, and I was not certain of the geography of the place, and, moreover, in my night-dress only, I thought it more prudent to return to my bed, and risk another

attack of earthquake than a certain cold and a probable tumble down the steep staircase.

I managed to find my way into my bed again, and into another deep slumber, from which I was roused by the same awful sounds as before, attended with the same results—a spring out of bed and into my sitting-room. It was then, however, beginning to get light; so, as soon as the “Bom, bom, bomming” had ceased, and the furniture and walls no longer shook and shivered, I dressed myself as quickly as I could, and rushed down to the porter’s lodge to seek an explanation of the causes which had alarmed me so much.

“Lord love ye!” said Cerberus, with a look made up with pity for my ignorance and sorrow for my fright; “it was only Great Tom.”

“Great Tom!” said I. “Is he mad and confined up above?” for I had suddenly conceived a notion that the clanking of machinery which I heard was the clanking of the chains and fetters of one “Poor Tom of Bedlam,” of whom I had read in my youth, and that the “Bom, bom, bom,” which had so alarmed

me, was the result of a violent attempt to escape by bursting open his door with a sledge-hammer.

“ Mad? Confined? What *do* you mean? Why, Great Tom’s a *bell*, and one of my principal perkisites. He’s just over your head, and holds communication with the great clock, and *hits* every hour. You’ll soon get used to him, though he is a little noisy at first. I never knowed a gentleman as had your rooms, as didn’t say he missed him uncommon when he changed for another set.”

With this explanation, my alarm at earthquakes and madmen ceased; and I doubted not that I should soon get used to the inconvenience, although it was not a slight one, as I was not given to nervous head-aches, and had a decided tendency to sleeping soundly.

I confined myself to my rooms during the next day, arranging my books and papers; and, after the clock had struck some half dozen hours, contrived to bear the noise without leaping out of my chair. In the evening I had got used to it, and sat down to my supper after it had *hit* nine, as the porter

phrased it, with a full determination to trouble myself no further about a mere clock and a great bell. I cut a slice of the grilled chicken before me, and was preparing to insert the first mouthful, when such a din arose as I had never heard before. "Bom, bom, bom!" forty times as loud as the clock-striking, was struck up and continued until my glasses, plates, dishes, knives and forks, fairly danced upon, and some of them off, the table. The books fell from my shelves, the poker, tongs, and shovel joined in the uproar; and the tables, chairs, and looking-glasses played their parts in a horrible accompaniment obligato. I stood, like a suddenly-aroused sleeper, amidst the ruins of Lisbon, wondering at the destruction around me, and expecting to be immolated every moment with the falling substances.

What could it mean? "Bom, bom, bom!" Was the clock gone mad? Did they count the hours differently in Oxford? or had the bell, in mercy to me, agreed to concentrate all its nightly doings into one continued strike?—to get rid of its work at once, and

be quiet for the rest of the night. I could not answer these queries; so I dashed down my fork, seized my trencher cap, and fled as fast as I could to the lodge, to seek an explanation of my friend the porter.

He was not at his post; but the under-porter told me that I should find him in the room above mine, which was used as a belfry. I did not choose to expose my ignorance of College matters, and my fears of being overwhelmed by my own furniture and apartments, to an under-strapper, nor did I feel disposed to venture up the staircase again until my doubts of its stability were resolved; so I walked round the square until I saw the porter descend, after the bell had ceased "Bom, bom, bomming," with a very much overgrown lantern in his hand.

"Is it you, Mr. Cuique?" he inquired, as I ran to meet him.

"I am not certain," said I, "for, to use an old joke, I feel like a double Cuique—a man beside himself. I have been frightfully alarmed. Great Tom—"

"Ah—ah—I twig—all my fault—I ought

to have warned you that, at ten minutes past nine every night, I have to pull this enormous clapper 101 times, as a hint to our 101 students to come into College and save their pennies. He does shake your room shocking; but you'll be up to him after a bit."

I thanked him for his information; and, heartily wishing him and Great Tom some hundreds of miles off, returned to my rooms; and, after I had set my things a little in their pristine order, finished my broil, and prepared for a quiet hour or two's reading.

I got on very well until the clock struck ten. The grating of the machinery, and the heavy blows on the bell, excited me and made me so nervous, that I felt convinced I should not be able to sleep at all for fear of the hourly attacks upon the tympanum of my ears. I had almost made up my mind to sit up all night, and go to bed in the morning, when a knock was given upon my oak. I sprung from my chair, and nervously hesitated to say "Come in," for fear that Great Tom himself might respond to my invitation. The absurdity of the supposition that such a heavy

fellow could have come down stairs without my hearing him descend, gave me courage to invite the knocker to enter.

It was my friend, the porter, who, with more consideration than my scout (who I suppose, from habit, thought nothing of the annoyances attached to Tom Staircase), had come up to give me his advice how to defeat the dangers of the nightly attack.

“Sir,” said he, “I knows as gentlemen as sleeps here for the fust term seldom gits any sleep unless they takes my remedy and puts on a *double nightcap*.”

“A woollen one, perhaps,” said I; “but I assure you, I never wore a nightcap in my life. Won’t a Welsh wig do as well? I have one that I bought to wear outside the coach.”

“Bless your innocence!” cried Cerberus, laughing. “I never had the least notion of meaning a literal nightcap—a bag with a tassel to it—I alludes to a mettyfurical one.”

“A sealskin travelling-cap, eh?”

“Worse and worse. In Oxford, a night-

cap is Greek or Latin for a strong glass of something warm. Try it on, sir, and, if one don't make you sleepy, try two."

Now, I had never been addicted to indulgence in nightly draughts; indeed, my poverty, if not my will, had made me a stranger to any thing stronger than a little mild ale, or a modicum of elder wine at Christmas time. I thanked the porter, however, for his advice, and resolved to follow it. I put on my kettle, and brewed myself a very stiff glass of gin-and-water, which certainly made me feel a little less nervous. The clock, however, struck eleven, and its strokes came so painfully distinct to my ears, that I tried a second, and then a third. This last dose had the desired effect; for, before I could make up my mind to undress and get into bed, I fell asleep in my reading-chair.

I was roused from a delicious dream of home and its comforts by something—I presume the clock striking twelve. "This will never do," said I. "If I drink any more, I shall be ill. I feel rather queer now—the candles seem to me to have umbrella-tops to

their wicks, and there are four of them burning; though I am convinced I only put up a pair. That horrid bell!—a capital idea strikes me; ‘face your enemy, and he’ll fly,’ so the copy-books say. I’ll go up and face Great Tom, and crack his head with the poker. Splendid notion!”

After making three unsuccessful bobs at my weapon of offence, I managed to secure it; and, taking one of the four candles, which I was surprised to find left only two on the table, I resolutely made my meandering way up the staircase, and came to a strong door on my left, fastened by a padlock. A well-directed, energetic blow with the poker made the fastening give way; and I found myself in a huge, high, hollow dome, with a spiral staircase leading to its roof, by the side of which hung a thick rope, which I felt assured was suspended from my enemy. Without the least hesitation, I rushed up; but, long before I got to the top, from going round and round with my feet, my head began to go round and round as well. I seized on the hand-rail, to save myself from falling, but

dropped my candle, which went down, spinning through the dark void like a spent rocket-stick, and lighted, without a light, on the floor below. I was so angry with it for leaving me in the dark, that I flung the poker after it and rushed on, heedless of consequences, until I tripped over a rope and fell, head first, upon a level floor, across which I rolled, like a shot out of a shovel.

I was stunned by the fall; but, when I recovered myself a little, I got up, resolved to find the bell. I put out my hands to grope my way; and felt a cold, smooth, metallic, concave surface, around which I travelled cautiously, until I caught my foot against something, which, on stooping to ascertain its nature, I discovered to be a rope. I passed my hand along it, and found it was attached by a slip-knot to a huge mass of iron, with a knot at the end, like an exaggerated college kitchen-poker.

“What *can* this be?” said I to myself. But, before I could reply to my own question, there came over me a sudden faintness and a conviction that I was *in the bell*—in the

very heart of my enemy—in the bowels of Great Tom.

I stood and trembled. A cold sweat burst out of every pore of my person. My hair seemed as if some centrifugal force had been applied to it, and that it was flying, or rather radiating, off my head, like the wig of the little men that they place on the top of an electrifying-machine. I struggled, I kicked, I screamed; I performed all sorts of contortions and gyrations in my endeavours to escape—all to no purpose. I thought I should go mad. My knees failed me, and with a deep groan I fell flat upon the floor, and knew that the knob of the clapper was within one inch of my own knob. What if the porter came to toll the students out of college? I must be smashed. What if the beam to which the bell was suspended gave way? I must be extinguished—my life put out, like the light of an inglorious mutton mould-candle. Horrible, humiliating thought!

I lay quite still, gazing up into the dark concave above me, until my overcharged imagination peopled it with all sorts of horribly-

shaped demons, clinging to the mighty clapper, grinning upon me with distended eyeballs, and jabbering at me, as if enjoying the fun my terrors afforded them. I closed my eyes—the perspiration issued more plentifully than ever from my skin, and with a desperate energy I shouted, “Porter!”

“What *ails* you?” said a deep-toned but musical voice immediately above me. “The porter is gone to snooze. Lie still, and don’t kick up such a bobbery. I allow no triple bobs, major or minor, up here; except the *bobs* they tip the porter for showing me.”

“I want to get out!” shrieked I; “I want to go home to my rooms.”

“You won’t go home till morning,” chanted the sonorous voice.

“Who are *you*?” I asked, in a perfect agony.

“The mighty Tom,” was the answer. “Not a man will leave his can till he hears the mighty Tom—no more *can* you.”

“My dear Old Tom,” said I, imploringly, “I—”

“Don’t call me ‘Old Tom,’” replied the

voice. "It is putting me on a level with Hodge's best, and reminds me of spirits—of which I never keep a stock up in this lonely situation—don't, old fellow."

This friendly and familiar salutation put me more at my ease; and as I could not get out of him, in one sense, I resolved to get as much out of him as I could in another.

"Coldish up here," said I, in that cool, off-handish way that one uses to get up a conversation with a stranger.

"I always take it cool," replied Tom. "I object to hot with, though some people don't—ahem! I am comfortably tiled-in; I have plenty of exercise every hour of the day—now don't it strike you?"—

"Not yet," said I, "but I am afraid it will soon."

"What do you mean?"

"Your clapper."

"My tongue—eh? Don't be afraid. I am no wag, but a most immoveable fellow. I never speak till I feel a pull upon me, and then, if they give me rope enough, I can talk pretty loudly. I am none of your light

weights, I can tell you; but what the students slangishly call a 'heavy swell,' far heavier than my brother of Lincoln. I lead here a noisy life of single blessedness."

"Then you have never been married," said I, by way of keeping up the ball of conversation.

"They have never been able to bring me to a ring yet; though they tell an absurd tale that when they attempted to do so, to celebrate the happy restoration of Charles II., I was indignant at such a liberty, gave up my situation, and *fell* through that diminutive circle of plaster ornaments that they point out under the gateway that bears my name. I believe it to be a vile pun on the name of Doctor *Fell*, who gave me this exalted situation. Great would have been my fall!—you don't fancy I am cracked, eh?"

"Certainly not," said I—"you're as sound as—"

"A bell. Good. But just wait one—"

Bang! Such a horrible blow fell upon my companion, that I sprung up and knocked my head against his side.

“Lie still,” said he; “it’s only the clock-hammer striking one. I am a lad of metal, and don’t mind being knocked about. The hourly blows I have received ever since Dr. Fell placed me here, are only so many proofs of my soundness.”

“Then you have not lived here all your life?” I inquired.

“How could I when this part of my house was not built till the middle of the seventeenth century? but I’ll tell you a little of my origin; it may amuse you. My family, and a very old family it is, came, if we can believe one Polydore Virgil, from Nola, in Campania, and were all originally ‘in the church.’ I was cast upon the world about the year seven hundred, and baptized—”

“What!” said I, “baptized? you don’t mean to say—”

“I do though; baptized and anointed too, like the kings of England—not greased, as my clapper is now—ay, and exorcised too by a bishop, to enable me to drive away spirits from mankind—like another Father Mathew. I was educated in Osney Abbey, just outside the University, with my brothers—”

“ Oh, you were not an only child then?— I should have thought, from your size, that all your family had been concentrated into one of immoderate bulk,” said I.

“ I was certainly a very large specimen of my species, but I had six brothers, nevertheless. They baptized them Douce, Clement, Hautcleri, Austin, Gabriel, and John. Why they should not have called him Jack as well as calling me Tom, I can’t think—my godfathers and godmothers could have had no taste.”

“ They meant it for a term of endearment—they never could have dreamt of calling you ‘ little Tommy.’ ”

“ Too ridiculous, certainly. Well, as I was saying, when you interrupted me, I was rather too comfortable at Osney, for Harry, the six-wife-power king, sent all my hearers to the right-about, seized their lands, pulled down their houses, and mine with it, and transferred me to St. Frideswide’s, which is now called the Cathedral. They must have had some little difficulty in bearing away the bell, though I could offer no resistance to their efforts. A scaffold was prepared for me, and I was hanged for the second time :

but I always felt in a state of suspense for fear the tower should give way and let me down. I was very glad when Doctor Fell removed me here; it is a much more respectable and roomy home; and, though dependent on a mere beam for my support, I want for nothing, not even visitors. You would really be astonished, my dear fellow, if you knew what a number of people called upon me in the course of a year. I should not dislike it, but they will, all of them, pull me about so—they use my rope like a long pole, to stir me up and set me roaring.”

“And your brothers?” said I.

“Poor little fellows!—it’s very degrading to the family, but I don’t mind telling *you*,” said Tom, in a deep whisper. “They were melted down, and are now used as pots and pans for pickling and preserving in the College kitchen—heigh ho! to what base uses we may come at last!”

“What! quote Shakspeare?”

“And why not?” said Tom. “Do you think I have lived so many years for nothing? I tell you what; though I do not despise, I

look down upon Oxford, and from my windows I have seen and heard such things as would astonish your weak mind. But you'll split, eh?"

I assured him I would not.

"Well," said he, "I like what I have seen of you. You have reposed in me—that is, you would have done so if I had not kept you awake with my chattering; and I do not mind relating to you a few anecdotes, and if you are ever inclined to tell them again, and are asked who told them to you, don't say 'Tom toll'd'—that's all."

"I promise," said I.

"Enough," said Tom. "I like that better than swearing—it's so vulgar. Now, as you cannot get to your rooms before 'daylight doth appear,' for you will break your neck down that confounded corkscrew staircase in the dark—"

"Or dash my brains out."

"Brains! good! you said brains last!—pretty well that for a freshman, but—*nunquam mens*—never mind. I'll just tell you one of my tales to while away the time.

Look out!—here comes that confounded hammer again.”

The clock struck two; Great Tom responded to the blows, and then began.

CHAPTER II.

A CASE OF ABSTRACTION.

“ My dear friend Tomkisson,” said the Honourable Dapper Willburton—they were both Christ Church men, the former a student, and the latter a gentleman-commoner of some three years’ standing—“ have you seen the subject for the Newdigate; the English prize poem?”

“ I have; and think it a most excellent one. ‘ On the consequences to the British dominions of the introduction of Chinese tea,’ ” said Tomkisson.

“ Of course you mean to write for it?” inquired the Honourable.

“ Why—really I—that is—you know I failed last year.”

“ But, for the honour of Westminster, try

again. You may win, and then your college and all your friends will be proud of you."

"Well—perhaps I may—but why do not *you* write for it? At Westminster you gained great *κῶδος* for your Latin verses, and you know what Cicero says—'omnes artes.' "

"I am not quite certain that I do—but, never mind. The fact is, my tutor used to tell me that, though my ideas were very brilliant, and my phraseology particularly poetical, he had some little doubts upon his mind that they were borrowed—cribbed, I suppose, he meant; it was very impertinent of him, but somehow it has made me shy of doing poetry ever since," said Willburton.

"Pooh!—nonsense! Why the selection of choice phrases from the older writers, and a judicious remodelling of their ideas, constitutes the best poetry of modern days. I know that you used to get your themes and verses done for you now and then at Westminster, but that was sheer idleness. We all knew you could do them yourself, if you chose; do try for the Newdigate."

"Well, I will, if you will—no rivalry, you

know, only a little friendly emulation ; but we must not let each other see the poems until after the prize is adjudged."

"Certainly not," said Tomkisson ; "I will try—and do my best too—though I seriously hope you may win."

"It certainly would be rather pleasant to hear, when one rises in the House for the first time—to propose or second the address perhaps—the question : 'Is he a clever man?' answered by, 'Of course he is—he got the Newdigate.' It starts one well on the road of parliamentary life," said the Honourable Dapper Willburton, looking senatorically.

Tomkisson, who cultivated his friend in the hopes of using him in after-life, squeezed his arm in a most affectionate manner.

"I suppose, the sooner we begin the better?" said Willburton.

"There is no hurry. We are limited, you know, to fifty lines," replied Tomkisson.

"Ay, there's the rub. So extensive a subject will require a great deal of concentration—will it not?"

"Certainly—you must not begin *ab ovo*

by minutely describing the planting, pruning, watering, and manuring of the plant, its budding and the gathering of its leaves by the little pig-tailed women and children; but plunge at once *in medias res*, and suppose the leaves made into tea and divided into Hyson, Twankay, Bohea, and other varieties, and carefully packed in lead. I think you might venture to describe the voyage—”

“What—swanlike wings—meaning sails—urging the ponderous bulk fraught with adventurous mortals o’er the trackless deep—walking the *trottoir* of the ocean like a thing of life, and all that sort—eh? that’s what you mean.”

“Exactly—only you had better clothe the ideas in newer phrases. Then you can be very moral about the substitution of the innocent salubrious beverage for the intoxicating and unhealthy draughts—”

“Porter, ale, and cider, wine, spirits, and other compounds, as licensed to be drunk on the premises,” said the Honourable.

“Precisely—only don’t allude to them in language quite so familiar to the ear. Then

you can describe the comforts of the poor—the husband abstaining from the boisterous mirth of the sink of iniquity, to share his—”

“Pot of tea instead of beer—”

“Yes—only—”

“With his missus and the little kiddies, as they call their wife and family,” said Willburton, showing an unwonted degree of poetical excitement. “Could not we introduce the cow—dappled sides—feeding in sea-green pastures—give a slight hint of the fable of Europa—have a touch at the milkmaid’s cherry cheeks, and the lowing herd winding slowly over the river Lea?”

“Better not, I think,” said Tomkisson, afraid to laugh at his friend; “but you can show your abilites and your horror of slavery, by venting your just indignation on the use of the sweetening medium grown under a burning sun, amidst the shrieks and groans of a fettered and lash-driven slave population.”

“Yes—and recommend the substitution of lump or loaf, which is more *refined*, you know—capital idea.”

“Then conclude by alluding to the pale

student over a cheering cup of the Seric juice and the—”

“ Benefits likely to result to the order and quiet of the university from the abandonment of claret-cup and egg-flip. I see—I see—it shall be done,” said Willburton.

Tomkisson, who was really a clever fellow in his way, and wished to give his honourable friend such hints of the subject as he might act upon, without appearing to cram him, thought he had said enough, and was about to leave him; but his friend retained his arm in his, and observed in a serious whisper—

“ Mind, old fellow, no one must know that we are writing for the Newdigate, and you must not be seen in my rooms or I in yours until we have finished and sent in our poems. The world is a cruel world, and, should I succeed, my success might be attributed to secondary causes. You see my meaning? *Sic vos non vobis*—eh?”

Tomkisson allowed that he did see his friend's meaning and understand his allusion. He agreed to submit to the terms proposed, although he said it would give him great

pain to interrupt, even for a short time, their pleasant meetings in each other's rooms.

"Never mind, old fellow, we can meet anywhere else, and that will do just as well," said Willburton.

Tomkisson was obliged to look as if he thought so,—though he did not—for, to tell the truth, he was devoted to meat-pies, savoury *pâtés*, *saucissons*, and other foreign relishes ; and his friend had an unlimited tick at Fortnum and Mason's.

They parted, and each went to his lodgings, for they had no longer rooms in college. Tomkisson had hired quiet apartments over Magdalen Bridge ; for much depended on his reading hard for a class. Willburton had gay rooms in the High Street, because he wished for anything but to be quiet and read. Then he was sure of plenty of idlers dropping in at all hours to smoke or chat, or do anything else that idle men used to do in those remote days ; he could look out of the window, and see the men go out hunting or riding, and all the coaches that passed

through the town, and lift his elbow to their well-known drivers.

When he arrived at his lodgings, he threw off his coat and neckcloth, put on a reading-gown, and sat down to meditate on his subject—for he was full of it. Presently an idea occurred to him for an opening couplet; he muttered it over to himself while he unlocked his writing-desk, spread out his paper, and mended his pen. He was just in the act of committing it to paper when a scuffling of feet was heard on his stairs, and three men rushed into his room with a view holloa. They burst out into a loud laugh at seeing the idlest man in the University sitting at his desk in his reading-gown at two o'clock in the day.

The laugh grated on Willburton's ears, and the shout annoyed his feelings. He showed it in his face.

"What, reading!—actually reading?" said one of the men.

"Writing to his lady-love," said the second.

"More likely to the governor for tin, or

to Fortnum and Mason for a *perigord*," said the third.

"I am busy, as you see, or rather about to be busy. I am beginning to write, and really I do wish you would leave me this morning," said the honourable.

"No such thing—you promised us a *sau-
cisson* and a jug of ale before you went down the water with us, so *sonnez le tingler*, and let us commence," said one of his callers.

"I really am going to be very busy, and cannot go down the water to-day. I don't mind standing lunch, if you'll promise to leave me to myself afterwards. I am going to write, I assure you—something very particular."

"Oh, of course, if that's the case—but order up the consumeables," said another.

The private tiger soon had everything prepared, and the three young men sat down, inviting their host to do the same, but he was too much excited by the couplet in his head, which he was afraid would escape, to accept their invitations. They stood upon no further ceremony, but commenced eating, while

Mr. Willburton walked up and down the room, repeating the verses louder and louder to himself, as he thought—until these words distinctly reached the ears of his friends—

“When the good ship—‘the Farquhar’—put to sea,
Laden with Twankay, Hyson, and Bohea—”

They laid down their knives and forks and shouted, “Bravo! Dapper turned poet! bravo! let us drink success to his vein poetic.”

“Willburton and his poem—hurrah! one cheer more for the bohea.”

“Really,” said Willburton, “I was forgetful—I did not mean to be heard—I did not wish my secret to be discovered—I—”

“Oh, then there is a secret—confess—make a clean breast,” said one.

“Let me see,” said the second; “I can explain, I think: ‘tea and bohea!’ You have seen the subject for this year’s prize poem? Well—depend upon it, Dapper is doing a Newdigate.”

Dapper could not deny it, so he owned the soft impeachment, and begged them as a favour not to divulge the secret to any one

else, (which, of course, they promised,) and to leave him as soon as lunch was over.

In this they obeyed him, intimating their hopes that he would knock off his poem quickly, and be a brick again.

“Capital opening,” said one.

“Splendid,” said another.

“I would not have missed it for a pony,” said the third; and all three burst into so loud a laugh just as they got into the street, that the Poet heard it clearly, though he had not the remotest idea that he caused it. He ordered away the luncheon, after finishing the jug of ale, and sat down and committed the couplet to paper. He tried a second, but could only get half another line.

“The sails were set, and—”

There he was aground. He bit his pen, ran his fingers through his hair, looked down on his boots and up on the ceiling; rose, and walked about the room; sat down again, and kicked his terrier that tried to jump up into his lap. He had heard that Poets sometimes required stimulants to bring out the ideas

imbedded in their brains, so he rang for his servant and ordered cigars with hock and Seltzer. The stimulants did their duty, and ere he had finished his first cigar he was able to complete the second couplet :

“ The sails were set, and all the sailors ready ;

The captain cried out ‘ Steady boys, there, steady.’ ”

Beyond this, hock, Seltzer, and weeds would not enable him to proceed. He had almost made up his mind to resign all chance of poetic fame, and generously to give his opening verses to his friend Tomkisson, when he fortunately recollected that his sister Henrietta was a contributor to an Annual, and had just done “ The Undone One,” to the uubounded admiration of her publisher who was delighted with lofty *names*.

To her he wrote, explaining his intentions and wishes, and begging of her to send him down, by return of post, her ideas upon the subject, expressed in a metre, of which he sent her a specimen, and not exceeding fifty lines. When he had sealed it and given it to his servant to post it, he dressed more quietly and soberly than usual, and walked down to

Hall dinner, where it was quite clear to him that his secret had not been kept by his friends of the morning, as many others wished him success in all his undertakings, and he heard several whispered titterings about "tea and Bohea."

He felt rather uncomfortable, but he looked as poetical as he could, and was consoled by the thought that he should meet Tomkisson at a wine-party in the evening, and could communicate to him the progress he had made in his verses, and the unlucky manner in which his secret had transpired. He resolved to obtain his sanction for the disclosure of *his* secret also, in order that their abstaining from each other's society, during the progress of the rival poems, might be properly appreciated.

Tomkisson readily assented to the proposition that he should be announced as a rival candidate for the Newdigate. As a matter of course, the announcement was received with loud applause, and his success drunk in "bumpers, and no taps;" to which he modestly replied, alluding in his speech to his

temerity in opposing so clever a person as his honourable friend on his right, and assuring the company that he should not have been rash enough to do so, had it not been at his honourable friend's suggestion.

Mr. Willburton, of course, thought it necessary to rise and explain, and his explanation was so satisfactory, that he was pronounced "a regular trump, and no mistake."

The president proposed that, instead of another bottle of claret, tea should be ordered, in order to test the candidates' abilities in handling the subject-matter of their poems; but his proposal was received with such audible cries of "No—no—shame—shame!" that he did not persevere, but resumed his seat.

Tomkisson retired to his lodgings early; but Willburton spent the evening at the party, where he sat late. In this he had a double motive—to show his friends that he could afford to waste *his* time, and thereby prove his superiority over his rival, and to convince them that they were not working together —

in short, that there was no collusion between them.

We must adhere to the honourable candidate for the present, and leave his rival to his studies.

By return of post the letter from his sister arrived, franked by "the governor." Dapper opened it, and found within an affectionate epistle, and a poem of fifty lines, neatly done in crow-quill. He sat down and read the verses carefully. Then he locked his door, and copied them in his own horrible scrawl, putting his dashes and blots here and there, that it might look like an original MS. Having accomplished this to his satisfaction, he burnt his sister's copy, and thought himself "safe to go in and win."

He very much wished to show the verses to his rival, and to ask his opinion of them; but he thought it would not do—he might catch an idea and convert it to his own use. He locked them up carefully, and nodded and winked mysteriously whenever he was asked how he got on. This system he carried on

for nearly a week, and then put on the idle man again, admitting to his friends that his task was done. Tomkisson said he was glad to hear it, as he had finished *his* poem, and meant to send it in on the following day.

This announcement, he could not tell why, made Mr. Willburton very nervous. Having openly set up as a rival to Tomkisson, he had a great horror of being beaten by him. He thought he could depend upon his sister's far-spread fame as a poetess, but still he thought it possible that her verses might be more suited to an Album or an Annual, than to a university *rostrum*; so at the eleventh hour he made up his mind to show them to his college tutor, and ask his opinion of them.

Mr. ——— expressed his delight to hear from his blushing pupil, whom he looked upon as a bit of a reprobate, that he had written for the Newdigate. He smilingly received the MS., and begged the author to be seated while he perused the verses. He read them carefully over, and then, leaning his pale brow on his pale hand, said—"Ingenious, exceed-

ingly ingenious; but I think I have seen them, or something like them, before."

Willburton was horrified, but said not a word.

"Have the kindness to give me that Anti-slavery Gazette at your elbow," said Mr. ——. "Ah!" said he, when he had received it, "I thought so—here they are—all the same ideas, only put into new and not so efficient words. It will never do, my dear young friend; I admire your ingenuity and your humanity, but I cannot approve of—to use a mild term—your mal-appropriation of the thoughts of others. There is your MS. I wish you a good morning."

Willburton snatched up the verses, tried to say something apologetic, but feeling something like a ball of worsted in his throat, and a swimming sensation about his head, he merely bowed and left the room.

What was to be done? He went to his lodgings, lit up a cigar, and meditated. His tutor, he felt assured, would never reveal what had taken place; it was confined to his

own breast, that he had meditated imposing his sister's verses on the University, and that she had "flung him" by imposing upon him an altered-for-the-worse version of lines from the Anti-slavery Gazette. Still he had announced himself a candidate for the Newdigate, and a candidate he thought he must be, or be laughed at by a large circle of acquaintances. What if he resigned from pure motives of friendship to Tomkisson? Such an excess of friendship would never be believed. What if he unbosomed himself to his friend, and induced him to resign, and transfer his verses to him—for a consideration—the promise of patronage and a cheque on the Governor? It was a very ticklish point. Tomkisson, though poor, was proud—proud of his scholarship. The Honourable Dapper Willburton was in what is too vulgarly called a *quandary*. At last he resolved to go and call upon his friend and sound him—but very gingerly—so slightly, in fact, that if he saw his approaches to an amicable arrangement disagreeable, he might retreat immediately without having given offence.

He put on his hat jauntily, to give himself a careless air, swinging one glove in his hand after he had put on the other, and, whistling to little Vixen, the terrier, strolled down High Street, as if he was merely going over Maudlen Bridge for a constitutional walk. He nodded exultingly to all the men whom he knew, as much as to say, "I have done it—all right."

He walked up into Tomkisson's lodgings, but found he was not at home. He felt a little angry as well as disappointed; he thought Tomkisson *ought* to have been at home to *him*; he *must* have known he wanted to consult with him. He resolved to write a note and tell him so; he went to his writing-desk, selected a pen, dipped it in ink, and lifted the lower partition for a piece of paper. What meets his eyes? What makes the honourable gentleman tremble? What causes the beaver, so jauntily put on, to be lifted, as it were, from his head?—merely a small parcel, resembling an overgrown letter, directed to the Professor of Poetry, and bearing the motto, *tulit alter honores*.

Some writer upon criminalities says, "Opportunity alone, in many instances, makes men thieves." Here was an opportunity! Before the Honourable Dapper Willburton lay the verses of his friend. What if he substituted his own; or, rather, his sister's; or, rather than that, the writer's in the Anti-slavery Gazette, for them? He went to the window and looked up and down—St. Clement's was clear of any one like Tomkisson, and so was Mandlen Bridge.

He closed the window, drew down the blind, and locked the door. He was about to break the seal of the packet, when he caught the eye of little Vixen gazing upon him, as he thought—reproachfully. There was more than instinct, there was reason, in the look. He was about to drop the packet and give up his design, but, after a moment's thought, he changed his mind, and kicked little Vic. across the room under the sofa. He broke the seal, abstracted the poem, which he slipped into his pocket, and having substituted for it the pirated verses of the Anti-slavery Gazette, he sealed the parcel again, and placed it ex-

actly as he had found it. He then drew up the blind, opened the window, and unlocked the door. He wrote a short note to Tomkisson, hoping to see him to wine with him; rang the bell violently for the maid, and having given her strict orders to be sure to deliver the letter on the table to Mr. Tomkisson when he came in, took a quiet stroll to Bullingdon and back again.

When he reached his own lodgings, he sent his servant out upon some frivolous pretence, and then folded up Tomkisson's verses, without reading them, in an envelope, most mendaciously assuming for a motto: *hos ego versiculos feci*, and directed them, after enclosing his name and college, sealed up, to the Professor of Poetry.

Tomkisson came to wine, with several other men, and never had he seen his friend in such spirits. He attributed them to a consciousness of having been successful in his trial for the prize; yet he could not help fancying at times that his spirits were not genuine, but adulterated. There was a fidgetiness about him, and his laugh did not seem quite natural,

especially when one of the party alluded to a gentleman who had been hanged that morning for breaking open the seal of a letter. He noticed that he turned rather pale ; that his hand trembled ; and that he spilt a portion of his claret on his shirt-frill ; but it might be the mere result of a vivid imagination ; he might be fancying himself present at the execution, and few men can witness a fellow-man suspended from a piece of twine, for the first time, without being a little affected by the sight.

To no one, in the course of that memorable evening, was the honourable host more attentive than to his humble friend. He neglected lords and gentlemen-commoners to pay especial attention to him. He saw his glass filled every time the bottle passed—proposed his health several times in various characters—as plain Tomkisson—as a student of Christ's Church—as stroke of the racing-boat, but not as a candidate for the Newdigate. In the excess of his gratitude, Tomkisson really wished that he had not sent in his poem in opposition to his honourable and generous

friend; and, jumping up from his chair, expressed a hope that the Newdigate bearing for its motto *tulit alter honores* might not be successful. Willburton felt sure it would not—though he did not say so.

The same kindness, the same most peculiar respect and attention, did Willburton show to his friend during the weeks that intervened between the delivery of the poems and the adjudgment of the prizes. They were never apart. They seemed to live together for one another, and upon one another; though, if the truth must be spoken, Tomkisson lived upon Willburton, and greatly added to the amount of Fortnum and Mason's bill.

This friendly—excessively friendly—feeling, between two rivals for a university prize, was highly estimated by their numerous acquaintances. It was only spoken of with undisguised admiration, and gave frequent opportunities, to many of their set, to show their classical attainments by comparing them to Nisus and Euryalus, Pylades and Orestes, and other gentlemen of ancient days, who had been celebrated for the intimate and friendly

footing on which they lived with each other.

Willburton was greatly excited while he awaited the decision of the prize. Although not previously addicted to drinking to excess, it must be allowed that he drank largely while the judgment was pending. Tomkisson took it cool, and his claret cool too—as usual. He really hoped that he might fail, provided his honourable friend succeeded. He could easily whisper to his set that “he had not put out his strength, to oblige a noble family.”

The important day at length arrived. A programme was issued, and the prize for the Newdigate adjudged to—a man of another college—an unknown man of a *small* college. This greatly disgusted the Christchurch men, generally; but Tomkisson felt a sort of relief that he had not succeeded against his honourable friend, and his friend was greatly relieved at the thought of his having escaped the consequences that must have ensued had he been declared the victor; for he must either have been exposed to the contempt of the university for having abstracted another's

exercise, or been the bonds slave of that other for the remainder of his life.

They had a very jolly evening over their failure, and received the condolences of their friends with great equanimity. Everybody said it was at least two hundred to one against each of them, and that was "long odds" for any one to contend against—which was very consolatory.

On the following morning, a message arrived from the Dean, requesting Messrs. the Honourable Dapper Willburton and Tomkisson to wait upon him in his study. They went, as in duty bound, wondering what he could want with them; but rather expecting a rebuke for their noisy conduct on the preceding evening. They found Mr. —, the college tutor, seated near the Dean. The tutor smiled benignantly on them as they entered; and the Dean, after shaking one of them kindly by the hand, and frowning on the other, thus addressed them:—

"Mr. Willburton, my friend, the Professor of Poetry, has, from a friendly feeling towards you, betrayed your secret, and for-

warded to me a copy of your poem. He assures me that he has had great difficulty in adjudging between you and the gentleman who has won the prize. Our house is greatly indebted to you, and you must oblige me, though the request is unusual, by reciting your verses in Hall."

Willburton would have given worlds for what players call "a vampire trap," that he might have bolted through it, and never been seen again.

"As for you, Mr. Tomkisson," continued the Dean, "you have not only been guilty of gross plagiarism, but you have copied your matter from a magazine, infamous for its heterodoxy, however famous it may be for its advocacy of anti-slavery principles."

Tomkisson stood aghast. Before he could refute the charge brought against him, Mr. — rose from his chair, and begged the Dean to allow him to see the poem which had called forth his indignation. He cast his eyes upon it, and then upon the writer.

Willburton rushed to the door, and, before the Dean could recover his surprise at his

sudden exit, he was half way across Canterbury Quad, on his way to his lodgings.

Great was the amazement of the three gentlemen who were left together, when they discovered that the poems had changed their envelopes and mottoes. They were puzzling themselves how to account for the extraordinary metamorphosis, without subjecting the writer of one of them to a foul and dishonourable charge, when a note was put into the Dean's hands. It ran thus :—

“Mr. Dapper Willburton begs to inform the Dean of Christchurch that *he* exchanged the prize poems in a *fit of abstraction*.”

Mr. Tomkisson received his reward in a first class and a college living, while the Honourable Dapper Willburton was spending his time in various cities on the continent.

CHAPTER III.

THE INSTALLATION.

——datus in Theatro

Cum tibi plausus.

HORACE, Ode xx. Lib. 1.

“What do you think of that, old fellow?” inquired Great Tom, alluding to the tale he had just told.

“Capital,” I replied.

“Capital? Then why did you not applaud it? What are your hands made for, eh?”

“I could not imagine *you* could want a *clapper*. You are so full of anecdotes, and tell them so amusingly, that I wonder you have never brought out a magazine or a paper,” said I.

“What, a new *Bell* Assemblée, or *Bell's* Life in Oxford? No, no: I am dependent on beams of solid oak, and not on beams from

fair ladies' eyes. I will make you the 'happy medium' of giving to the world my extensive views of Life in Oxford. Should you like to hear another story?"

"There can't be a doubt about it," said I. "Pray oblige me."

"Well, just wait until that heavy hammer pats me on the back. Here he comes—Bom, bom, bom! —there's encouragement! I'm off."

"This is abominable, shameful—I'll not endure it longer," said an irate Welsh Squire of the county of Glamorgan. "Half-past nine on a fine May morning, and breakfast not ready yet! Here have I been up these three hours, ridden round my farm, scolded all the labourers, and threatened to discharge my bailiff; and when I come home, expecting to find my wife and her niece waiting breakfast for me, I find myself waiting for them and breakfast too. I'll let them know my mind, and directly too."

Mr. Cadwallader Price rang the bell violently, and walked to the window, which was

open. The peacock came up and uttered a peculiar note, implying a request for a bit of bread.

“Go to the ——! but no, it ain’t your fault. Although my breakfast is not ready, yours is. There, poor Tom,” said the kind-hearted old gentleman, “there, eat that, and enjoy yourself.”

The peacock picked up his crumbs, unfurled his tail, and strutted about to show his hundred eyes, as proudly as Argus.

“Confound that Wilkins!—won’t he answer the bell? I will see.” Pull, pull, pull—tingle, tingle, tingle. “There, I think that *must* fetch him. No! Well, here goes again. Confound the bell-pull! They don’t know how to make bell-pulls now-a-days, or this would not have come off in my hands.”

“Wilkins! Wilkins!” shouted Mr. Price at the door, after he had thrown the delinquent bell-pull out of the window. A triple-voiced echo, proceeding from the throats of the housemaid, cook, and scullion-wench, answered, “Wilkins, Wilkins, Wilkins!”

“ Well, hur’s a comin’. What dost make a pother for?” replied Mr. Wilkins.

“ Master’s in his tantarums, and has rung twice fit to bust the bell,” said the cook.

“ He’s been a swearing like mad,” said the housemaid. “ And a holloring like winkin’,” said the scullion.

“ I heard hur all the time, but I know’d what hur wanted, and I could not get the urn to bile. Hur won’t *hiss*, do all I can,” said Wilkins, as he wended his way to the breakfast-room.

“ Won’t hiss?—what won’t hiss, you old fool?” said his master.

“ Why this here urn ; hur won’t hiss a bit, though hur knows her biles. Hur’s as silent as the grave.”

“ It is tacit-urn, that’s all,” said Mr. Price ; and, in laughing at his own shocking bad pun, he forgot to abuse Wilkins for five minutes. At last, his laughter was exhausted, and his rage broke out.

“ Where is your mistress?”

“ Hur don’t know.”

“ Where is her niece, Mary Owen?”

“ Hur can’t say.”

“ Where is the postboy?”

“ Hur’s putting up hur pony.”

“ Where are the letters and papers?”

“ Hur’s got him in hur pocket.”

“ There, leave off fiddling about the table, and go and fetch the letters, and call the ladies, and go — anywhere you like afterwards.”

Wilkins deliberately altered the position of every knife, fork, plate, dish, and teacup; coolly surveyed the effect of the new arrangement, and walked slowly out of the room. His master thrust his hands to the very bottom of his breeches’-pockets, whistled a Welsh air—not a very lively one—called Wilkins an old fool, and told him he would discharge him the moment breakfast was over.

Wilkins heard the threat, but he had heard it so often before that he thought nothing about it. As he happened to meet the scullion-wench in his way to his pantry, he told her to tell the cook to let the housemaid know that she was to inform the ladies’-maid that the Squire was waiting breakfast for

their mistresses. He then sauntered into the stable-yard, and, after inquiring of the letter-boy all the news he had heard at the post-town, asked for the letters. When he had carefully examined the postmarks, speculated on the handwriting of the directions, and inspected the seals, he walked leisurely into the house to deliver them; but on his way it struck him he might as well have the first look at the newspaper; so he turned into his pantry, burst the envelope, and spelt the leader, while he was pretending to air the paper. Having satisfied himself that there was no prospect of an immediate change of government, and that the funds were not likely to be affected by any political event, he took the toast-rack and the contents of the letter-bag up to his master.

“Give the letters to me, and the paper to your master,” said Mrs. Price.

“Put them all down together here, by my side, sirrah, and leave the room,” mumbled Mr. Price, through the folds of a large slice of ham.

Wilkins looked first at his mistress, and

then at his master ; and, as he did not wish to offend either of them, gave the letters and papers to Miss Mary Owen, and vanished.

“ Pack up ! ” screamed the Squire ; “ you go directly after breakfast.”

“ How can you, Mr. Price ? Really, you put yourself in *such* passions, that, what with anger and hot tea, your face looks apoplectic at this moment. You’ll have a fit, depend upon it,” said the lady. “ Mary, my love, give me the letters.”

“ At your peril ! ” screamed the Squire ! “ you—you, who are living here upon my bounty—you dare to disobey ! pack up ! that’s all.”

“ Dear uncle, dear aunt,” said Mary, bursting into tears, “ what *am* I to do ? how am I to act ? ”

“ Pooh ! nonsense, girl !—Mary—my dear child—I did not mean—there, don’t cry ; give your aunt all the letters directed to her, and hand the rest to me—there, don’t be a fool—leave off crying—give me a kiss and another slice of ham.”

Mary obeyed all the orders as well as she

could; but, as the tears made her eyes dim, she could not read the directions clearly, and gave one of her uncle's letters to her aunt.

"Delightful!" said the lady; "here is the Oxford postmark—a letter from dear Owen."

"Not directed to *you*, I'll take my affidavit; my son Owen always writes to *me*. Give it to me. Mary, it is abominable." But Mary was too much interested in the contents of her cousin's letter to heed her uncle.

"What can it matter to which of his parents Owen writes? It equally concerns us both," said Mrs. Price, as she broke the seal.

The Squire said something which sounded very like an oath, and, seizing the paper, dashed it open with his right hand, just as players think it proper to open a letter on the stage, and pretended to be deeply interested in its contents.

"Cadwallader, my dear, Owen tells us that he has taken his degree," said the lady.

“Ha! hum! he! Stocks a degree worse, I see,” said Mr. Price, quoting the paper.

“And he says that there are to be grand doings at Oxford this summer. The Duke is to be installed as Chancellor.”

“Ha! hum! first of May—grand procession of sweeps.”

“He wishes us to pay him a visit.”

“Hum! ha! the visiting justices complained of great extravagance, and——”

“He has hired lodgings for us.”

“And lodged a complaint against the governor.”

“Cadwallader, my dear, do you hear? Hand the letter to your uncle, Mary.”

Mary did so. The old gentleman coquetted for a time; but his curiosity, and his anxiety to hear from his only son, induced him to drop his paper to read the letter, parentally and parenthetically thus:

“‘Dear Governor,’ (disrespectful) ‘I am happy to tell you that I am now an A.B. The fees came to £17 odd’ (and very dear too.) ‘We are to have a scrimmage,’ (what

the deuce is that?) ‘a regular shindy’ (oh! a slang phrase for a town and gown fight—hope he’ll get thrashed) ‘this term. The Duke is to be installed’ (my coach-horses are in-*stall*-ed every night—ha! ha!), ‘all the world will be here, so you must come up, and bring the governess’ (meaning you, mam) ‘and my dear cousin. Lodgings are very dear, but I have hired you a sitting-room and two bed-rooms, in the High Street, at only five guineas’ (a month?) ‘a day.’ (Oh! Lord!—ruin—ruin!) ‘You can breakfast and dine in the hall, and it will be put down in my battels’ (yes—and I shall have to pay for it.) ‘We shall have lots of champagne; and you may as well bring your cheque-book with you, as I should like to get rid of my ticks’ (so would my sheep.) ‘I don’t owe much, but should not like to leave the ’varsity’ (slang again) ‘owing anything—but you know all about that.

‘Your affectionate son,’ (yes, very!)

‘OWEN PRICE.’

“Know all about that. Yes,” said Mr. Price. “Don’t owe much—a hem!”

“ Well, my love, Owen seems to have got through his career creditably.”

“ With a great deal of credit, no doubt. Most men do. There were Hugh Williams, and William Hughes, and Owen Roberts, and Robert Owen, your relations, madam, left it with great credit—to the amount of £1,500 among them.”

“ Well, my love, you had better write and say what day he may expect us.”

“ Do, dear uncle ; I do so long to see Oxford,” said Mary.

“ Don’t doubt it ; but no, I will not go ; it would cost me—let me see—post-horses, turnpikes, inns, and lodgings—it would cost at least——”

“ What can it matter what it would, cost, Mr. Price ? You are rich enough to afford it. You have only one child, and plenty of money, which ——”

“ Which I made by my own exertions. Did I not work like a slave while I was at the bar, to redeem the family estate, and buy out the button-maker from Birmingham, who was mortgagee over the property ? I have

worked hard, Mrs. Price, and do not intend to squander my money away ; besides, what do I care for shows and ceremonies, and _____”

“ Though you are too old to enjoy such scenes, you ought not to forget that younger persons ——”

“ Madam — Mrs. Price—although I am twenty years your senior, and made an ass of myself by marrying a young woman, I am not too old to enjoy myself ; I can walk ten miles with any one, now—and to prove it to you, I *will* enjoy myself—I *will* go up to Oxford, renew my old acquaintances ——”

“ If there are any of them left,” said Mrs. Price, *sotto voce*.

“ —— and drink champagne to excess, just to oblige—not you, madam, but my niece, there. Wilkins, take away, and bring me the portfolio and inkstand.”

Mrs. Price, having gained her point, beckoned to her niece, and both of them left the room to look over their silks and satins, and to see what would be wanting for their visit to Oxford.

Wilkins, having cleared the table, stood before his master, and, smoothing down his gray hairs, said, "Hur's packed up, and ready to go."

"Go! you old fool, where do you mean to go?"

"Hur don't know."

"Who'd engage such a plaguy fellow as you?—an old donkey that has grown gray in my service, eh?—Go? yes, go and get what I ordered you; and hark ye, Wilkins, you must order a new suit of livery, for I mean to take you up to Oxford with me."

"Oxford!" cried Wilkins, showing as much astonishment at the notion of his master's going to that beautiful city, as if he had not heard every word of his young master's letter read. "Oxford! hur should like to see it once more, for her liked it much when hur was up at college with hur master."

"Ah, Wilkins, that's many years ago now," said Mr. Price; "yet I can recollect many scenes and many familiar faces, that time ought to have blotted out of one's memory."

"Does hur recollect carrying away the

sign of the Mitre, and nailing it over Dean Jackson's door?"

"Ah! ah! yes—well—well, it was prophetic, however. He was a bishop soon after!"

"Hur remembers, too, stealing the college laundress's board, and putting it in Surgeon Steven's window, so that every one who passed by saw plainly written up, 'Mangling done here?' "

"Ah! ah! yes—Wilkins—poor Jones got expelled for that job; he lost his gown in running away from the Proctor, and was fool enough to offer five shillings reward for its recovery."

"And hur master escaped, because her knocked down the bull-dog who was carrying hur off to college."

"You did—you did—and got your knuckles cut against his great teeth. You don't forget the town and gown fight at Carfax, on the 5th of November?"

"Hur never can; how you did knock about that big bargeman—one, two, three, down he went."

"Up he was again—right and left—there

he had it—he rushed in—I caught him under my left arm, and hammered away at his head with my right hand.”

“ Hur tried to trip you up.”

“ Could not, though—I was too strong for him; full of ale and spirits—animal ones, I mean—at last he gave in—three cheers for the gown, and home to college before we were caught by the Proctors; hurrah! those were jolly days.”

Both master and man had got so excited by their reminiscences, that, without knowing it, they were sparring at one another as if about to re-enact the fighting scene. Suddenly, however, the Squire dropped his arms, looked very foolish, and, having given a loud cough, said,

“ This is very silly; we must forget it all, Wilkins; we must forget all our youthful follies—go—go—fetch the inkstand and portfolio.”

Wilkins looked more foolish than his master, for, as he turned to go, he saw his mistress and her niece standing at the door and laughing at the extraordinary scene which

they, unobserved by the performers, had witnessed. He ran away faster than he had ever done, since he ran away from the Proctors.

Mr. Price, after endeavouring to explain away the strong impression of his youthful improprieties, which he was fearful he had made upon the minds of the ladies, sat down and wrote to his son, to tell him the day and hour when he might expect to see him at Oxford.

“Come, Price Owen,” said Owen Price to his cousin, Mary’s brother, “finish that cold beef and the tankard. I must get all cleared away and made tidy before the governor arrives.”

Price Owen was not very long in fulfilling his cousin’s wishes. He took a long draught, and handed the silver vessel across the table to show that he had done his duty. Owen Price, finding that there was not above half a pint left, absorbed it. They were both Welshmen, and, as Oxford men firmly believe, Welshmen drink nothing but beer; though

they disguise it under the *alias* of *coorook*, or some such queer name.

“ At what hour will my uncle be here ? ”
inquired Price Owen.

“ In time for dinner. I have ordered a neat little spread from that prince of cooks, brother Jubber, to be ready in his lodgings at six o’clock.”

“ Where have you put them ? ”

“ At the print-shop just opposite St. Mary’s. Capital place to see everything and everybody, and very cheap, considering.”

“ How do they travel ? ”

“ Post, of course ; in the old family tub that the governor calls a carriage. I have taken care to secure four good horses at every stage on this side of Bath.”

“ *Four* ? Why, uncle is doing things more liberally than usual, is he not ? ”

“ Rather so ; but when he does make up his mind to do anything out of the common way, he does it handsomely.”

“ Would it not be as well just to set your rooms to rights a little before he arrives ?—just to put these whips, foils, and boxing-

gloves out of sight; take down one or two sporting prints, and that spinning opera dancer—eh?”

“No, no. The governor knows I indulge in little follies and fooleries, and I have no wish to play the hypocrite. There is nothing vicious in driving, riding, fencing, or sparring; and, as to mademoiselle there, he knows I never saw the original of the picture in my life.”

“You don’t mean to let the ladies criticize your furniture, I presume. Here’s a hearth-rug!” (holding up a thing full of holes and poker-burnings). “There’s a looking-glass!” (pointing to a mirror with a diverging crack across it, such as is seen on the ice, when a little boy throws a large stone upon it.) “Just look at those curtains, and that legless sofa!”

“Oh! never mind. They know that I am in my last term, and about to *third* the valuables to the next comer-up, and will make due allowances. Here, however, is a little document that will rather astonish the governor and try his temper,” said Owen Price, as he unfolded a long paper with three red lines,

filled with figures, extending down to its very bottom.

“What the dickens is that?” inquired Price Owen.

“Merely a list of my ticks—that is all.”

“All? What is the amount of the all?”

“Only some £749 1s. 5½*d.*”

“Whew!” whistled Price Owen, with his eyes starting out of his head.

“You may well whistle, considering you are almost a fresh-man. I did not think that I had contracted debts to one quarter the amount. The governor gave me a fair allowance, and I paid bills every term, but, you see—there it is—I cannot dispute an item of it. The ruinous system of ticking is injurious both to the giver and taker of credit. Take warning by this little document, cousin—mind and pay ready money for everything.”

“I have done so hitherto, but I have been sorely tempted to infringe the rule I have laid down; for things are thrust upon you, as it were, and you are so politely requested to allow the sellers to book them, with an assurance that you will be allowed to consult

your own convenience as to the time of payment, that it is difficult to resist."

"The system is a very bad one. Everybody allows it to be so, and no remedy has yet been found to correct it effectually. I am weak enough to fancy that if an act were passed making University-men's debts irrecoverable in any court of law, after they had been contracted more than six months, it would put an end to the long-ticking system altogether."

"And save much misery to both vender and buyer," said Price Owen.

"But a truce to this. There are the bills, justly due to as honourable a set of tradesmen as any in the country—though it is the fashion to abuse them—and the governor must find the wherewith to discharge them."

"He will be in a terrible passion," said Price Owen.

"He will, for a time; a very little puts him out of temper; but I am not afraid; for, let him examine the bills—which he will do, for he is a man of business—and he will find none among them for the effeminacies of

Oxford life—tarts, trinkets, and trumpery—but all for manly sports and pastimes, rowing, hunting, shooting, fishing, and driving, in which he himself once delighted.”

“ I am grateful—especially under these circumstances—that I have as yet managed to pay my way with the income derived from my scholarship, and the allowance which my uncle, your father, kindly allows me. I owe all to you, Owen Price; for, had it not been for your kind and disinterested suggestions in my behalf, I should have been nailed to a lawyer’s desk all my life.”

“ My suggestions were not perhaps so disinterested as you imagine. You are a mere boy of seventeen, and do not know the world” (the speaker was *nearly* three-and-twenty). “ When you are as old as I am, you will look for a motive—a selfish one, too—in the actions of every man.”

“ I can imagine but one motive, and that only half-selfish, in which you were actuated in your kindness towards me,” said Price Owen, taking his cousin by the hand.

“ And that is——”

“ An affection—more than cousinly—for my sister Mary.”

“ You are right. I am not ashamed to tell you that I love your sister, and on her account was anxious to promote the wishes of her brother. We have been brought up together from children, and her beauty, aided by her virtues and amiable qualities, have made an indelible impression upon my heart.”

“ But my uncle ?”

“ Does not, I believe, suspect my feelings towards her, although your aunt, my mother, I am persuaded, both sees and encourages them ; but I am resolved to speak openly to him on the subject, for I never have a wish to conceal anything from him that is not mean and dishonourable.”

“ Success attend you ! I could not wish for Mary a more desirable lot than to be united to you.”

“ Enough. Now let us walk out and see what the world—for all the world is here on this occasion—is doing with itself.”

The cousins walked arm-in-arm down the quiet Turl without meeting a soul ; but when

they reached the High Street they found it filled with gownsmen of all ages and degrees ; strangers of every rank in life, from the humblest labourer to the titled landowner ; from peasant to peer ; and ladies, beaming with beauty and dressed with taste and elegance, who walked or rode, attended by their assiduous swains and their watchful chaperons and guardians. A gayer scene was never witnessed ; care seemed to be banished ; joy sat on every face ; delight beamed from every eye. The houses and shops looked as if dressed in holyday garbs, and the windows above the basement stories were filled with gazers on the merry crowd below. Suddenly the tide of strangers seemed to be ebbing from the town, and it appeared as if the High Street would soon be at low-water mark. Horsemen and carriages pressed through the foot-people, and were urged, as hastily as the crowd which impeded their way would permit, towards Magdalen Bridge.

“ Make haste, or you will be too late,” said a college friend to the cousins, as he was hurrying by them.

“ Too late for what ? ” asked Price.

“ To meet the Duke—come along—all the men are halfway to Iffley by this time.”

With pushing and squeezing, amidst expostulations and apologies, the three young men forced their way down the High Street, and over the bridge to the London road. It was lined on either side with an uninterrupted row of spectators, between whom were stationed carriages of every description. The eyes of all were directed towards the eminence above Oxford called Rose Hill; and for some time nothing was seen but the dense mass of human beings, and the lines of carriages, waiting to greet the hero of the age. Suddenly, however, a thick cloud of dust appeared, coming like a mist over the hill; a body of horsemen was seen dashing down the ascent, and a cry of “ The Duke ! the Duke ! ” flew from mouth to mouth. The bells from every tower struck up a joyful peal, loud shouts rent the air, and caps and hats were to be seen whirling about in all directions.

A space was speedily cleared in the centre of the road by a body of gownsmen on horseback

and on foot. On came the plain green chariot containing the new Chancellor; and, as his ear caught the stormy shrieks of welcome, and as his eye gazed on the crowds assembled to greet him, his iron soul, as the papers call it, was subdued; a peculiar muscular action about the mouth, and a nervous application of the tongue to the parched lips, showed that the man who stood calmly and coolly gazing on the plain of Waterloo, while the fate of two mighty nations were suspended in the balance, was moved — painfully moved — by the excitement of the scene before and around him.

“Hurrah! hurrah! the Duke, the Duke! long live the Duke! Three cheers for our Chancellor!—hurrah! hurrah — hurrah — ah —ah!”

Amidst crushing, rushing, shrieking, and screaming, the rolling of carriages, the trampling of horses’ feet, and the booming of bells, the Duke was borne to the Vice-Chancellor’s, whose lodgings were the centre of attraction for the remainder of that memorable day.

Slowly and with difficulty did Owen Price

and his cousin extricate themselves from the crowd: they were heated and excited. Both were "hoarse with bawling." Each had suffered a loss; for Owen Price had lost his cap, and Price Owen had had his scholar's gown deprived of half its fair breadth and proportions.

"Never mind," cried the elder; "come along, or we shall be too late to receive the governor—an offence he would never forgive."

Away! up Cat Street, across by the Radcliffe Library, up Exeter Lane, and into the Turl, they sped; a turn to the right, a spring across the street, and they were within the college-gates. A rush up stairs into Owen Price's rooms showed them that they were in time to meet their friends, for the apartments were unoccupied.

"Come, come, Price Owen, let us dress as speedily as possible, for we look pretty objects, what with the dust, the perspiration, and the struggles we have been through."

"I have not a dry thread about me, and my mouth, throat, eyes, and ears, seemed filled with burning sand."

“Away with you, then, to your rooms; and as soon as you have made yourself comfortable and presentable, return here to meet and greet your friends; and I say, old fellow, if you *should* see a scout in quad, do just order a tankard from the buttery.”

A few minutes sufficed to restore their personal appearance; and Owen Price was not a little pleased to see his cousin return, followed by a scout, bearing a huge silver cup, filled with mild ale. “The Duke!” shouted he, before he placed the vessel to his lips. “The Duke!” cried the other, ere he handed it, exhausted, to the scout; and bade him go follow their example, at his expense, in the buttery; an order of which John was not slow to avail himself.

“Hark!” cried Owen Price, “hark! I hear the rumble of wheels; that must be the governor; I can swear to that particular roll of the tub anywhere. Here they are, pulled up at the gates; let us run and meet them.”

Down rushed the eager pair, four or five steps at a spring, and dashed through the portals just as the steps were being let down.

“My dear boy!” cried the Squire.

“My dear Owen!” said the mother.

“Dear brother, dear cousin,” whispered Mary.

“How do ye do? how do ye do? Glad to see you. Ah! Wilkins, is that you? how are you?”

“Hur’s almost choked with the dust.”

“Well, never mind, you shall wash that away presently. You know the buttery—eh?”

“Hur used to know it well,” said Wilkins, winking.

“It stands just where it used to stand. So, do you and Lucy go on to the lodgings, and get the things unpacked, and we will follow on foot. Postboy, drive on to the printseller’s, opposite St. Mary’s.”

Away rumbled the tub with the two servants. The Squire, too happy at seeing his son and nephew and his old college again, had quite forgotten to put himself in a passion with the postboy for having driven too slow, or too fast—he had forgotten which. He grasped the boys’ hands, gave a violent

rap on the ground with his stick, looked up and down the Turl, gazed on the college-gates, and seemed to fancy himself young again. A deep sigh, however, as he dropped his eyes, put his left arm behind his back, and walked into college, leaning heavily on his stick, seemed to show that the fancy had given place to a strong conviction that he had been dreaming of "long, long ago."

"What a room!" cried Mrs. Price. "I declare I never saw such a place in my life."

"It is rather out of sorts: but you know, dear mother, I am just going to give up my rooms—so you see I did not think it necessary to go to any expense in—"

"Quite right, boy, quite right," said the Squire. "I recollect, when I went down for good, my rooms were not much better."

"But, heavens! what a carpet!—what a rug! and Mary, my dear, do not venture to sit down on that sofa, nor on any of the chairs—they will soil your new silk pelisse!"

"Pooh! pooh! madam, sit down, I insist upon it, while I go to call on the Principal. I never came up to Oxford in my life without

going to pay my respects to the head of the college before I did anything else."

Owen Price accompanied his father to the door of the Principal's lodgings, and, when he had seen him admitted, ran back to his own rooms to take the opportunity of having a little private talk with his mother and Mary. They had a longer chat than any of them could have anticipated; but the Squire had got upon "the days gone by" with the Principal, who was a man of his own standing, and forgot the rapidity with which time was flying, until reminded of it by the college clock striking five.

A few minutes sufficed to enable the visitors to reach the apartments provided for them. The dinner was nicely served and admirably cooked. The Squire pronounced it excellent, and flew out only once to blame his son for not having ordered a brown George and a dish of sausages, forgetting that the latter were out of season, and that the former was only eaten at breakfast. He drank freely of champagne, and urged the ladies to follow his example, but left "the boys" to do as

they pleased, knowing any exhortation on the subject would be a mere waste of words. He even insisted on Wilkins's drinking one glass to the health of the Duke ; but Wilkins begged to be excused, saying—

“Hur never liked *pop*, and would rather drink to his Grace in the buttery. Hur knew what ale *was* made of.”

“Sorry to hurry you, my dear father, but push on the claret ; we must not sit over our wine, but take the ladies into Christ Church Meadow to see the boats come in,” said Owen Price.

“What ! a boat-race ?” cried the Squire ; “bumpers round—here's success to the crews—hurrah ! I remember the time when I pulled stroke myself.”

“There will be no race this evening, uncle, but a splendid sight ; all the boats row down to Iffley and up again two or three times, in the order of their flags.”

“Flags ! Iffley ? I don't understand. In my days, we had no flags, and always pulled up to Medley or Godstow,” said the Squire.

“Well, never mind, my dear ; let us go

and see them. Come, Mary Owen will take care of you, and your brother of me," said Mrs. Price.

"And I may take care of myself, I suppose. Well, never mind. One more bumper though before we go. Oxford!—for with all thy faults I love thee still!—Oxford! glorious old Oxford! hurrah! my boys, hurrah!" The Squire drank the bumper to the dregs; and, in his excitement, threw the glass over his shoulder, and smashed it to pieces. He then seized his cane, and looked round, as much as to say, "Let any one laugh at me that dares." No one felt disposed to smile even, for his feelings were understood and respected.

What crowds filled thy meadow, oh! house founded by eighth Henry and his Chancellor, on this joyful evening! Never had Oxford witnessed such a multitude of all that is great and good in this favoured land before, and never can it again. Royalty trod the same path with the humble artisan. Peers and peeresses mingled with tradesmen and their wives. Lords were shouldered by

commoners, and ladies contended with sempstresses to gain the most favourable positions for seeing the procession of boats. Pride had forgotten its own existence, and pomposity was at a most lamentable discount.

“Here they come ! Hurrah, Christ Church ! Hurrah, Brazenose ! Go it, Baliol !” roared the Squire. His fine, hearty voice was heard above the murmuring of ten thousand tongues, and a universal shout rent the air as boat after boat, manned by crews of as fine young men as are to be seen anywhere, swept by to the barge. Again and again was the shout raised, until Isis trembled within her sedgy banks, and enthusiasm almost grew into madness.

A crowd of young men had, as usual, filled the top of the barge. In a sudden lull of the mighty storm of shoutings, one of them took off his hat and cried, “A cheer for the Duke !” All the other cheers appeared like a mere murmur of distant waves to this. It was astounding — frightful. A dead silence followed, and men gazed in each other’s faces, as though they would seek there an explana-

tion of the feelings that possessed themselves.

“Come home—come home, boys—I cannot bear it, it is too much,” said the Squire, as the tears coursed each other down his cheeks. “This is worth living for; but come home — come home. What are you snivelling for, you sons of guns?”

A quiet chat over the coffee-tray closed the evening; at which Mr. Wilkins could not officiate, for he was paying his respects to the buttery-tap, and talking over old times with the aged college servants.

Mr. Owen Price did not think it right to risk the equanimity of his father by laying before him the account of his ticks on the first evening of his arrival; but, on the following morning, after a hearty breakfast in his own rooms, at which the brown Georges were not forgotten, he contrived to induce his mother and cousin to go to their lodgings under the protection of Price Owen, and prepare for the theatre, while he had a little conversation with the Squire.

“My dear father,” said he, as he put the long list of £. s. d.’s into his hand, “I am afraid you will think me very extravagant; but I think it best to confess that I have exceeded the very liberal allowance you made me, and am in debt, as you will see by this paper.”


“Hum — hum — let me see. Wine merchants—tailors—dinners at hotels—a new skiff — a sailing-boat — hum — hum — total amount — what? Hang me if I pay it! I never heard of such extravagance. I’ll lay it before the Vice-Chancellor, and have the men discommoded. I’ll expose it and you to the whole world,” cried the Squire, as he laid his heavy hand upon the document, with a thump that made the breakfast things dance upon the table.

His son did not reply, but stood the very picture of a penitent spendthrift, until his father had exhausted a vast fund of vituperative eloquence, and worked off his passion. He then ventured to hint at his sorrow for his past follies; to which he added a promise of amendment for the future, and a hope

that he might not be permitted to disgrace his family by leaving the University in debt.

This last was an able thrust, which the high-minded country gentleman could not parry. After a long lecture on the impropriety of his son's proceeding, and a threat of disinheritance if he ever contracted another debt, he took a cheque out of his pocket-book, and filled it up with an order upon his bankers, sufficient to cover the whole amount.

Just as Owen Price had locked up the cheque in his desk, poor Wilkins made his appearance, looking very seedy indeed, from his overnight's indulgences, to inquire at what hour the carriage would be wanted to take the ladies to the theatre. So favourable an opportunity of getting into a violent passion was irresistible. The Squire had good grounds to go upon, he thought, and he abused his old servant as a beer-drinking sot, and told him to pack up and quit his service immediately. Wilkins listened respectfully, but without the slightest signs of contrition in his countenance; and, when the order to pack up had been repeated for the third or



fourth time, calmly said, "Hur only had a quart or two, and it was impossible hur could taste all the taps and not get a little fuddled. Hur didn't think, however, that the ale was anything like so good as it was in his honour's under-graduate days."

"Of course not," said the Squire, and talked himself cool again in proving the degeneracy of everything since *his* college days—even of the brown Georges—which he attributed to the passing of the Reform Bill, and the admission of the Roman Catholics into Parliament. He ended his oration by ordering the carriage to be at the door in less than half an hour.

As the ladies were not quite ready when Wilkins announced the carriage, Mr. Price had another excellent excuse for displaying his iracundity. He scolded his lady and poor Mary, not only down the stairs, and as they were getting into the carriage, but during all the tedious half hour that it took the postboy to drive them, about five hundred yards, to the gates of the theatre. Mrs. Price took no notice whatever of her husband's harangue, but

amused herself by looking at the crowds of carriages and the throngs of people that filled Broad Street. Poor Mary, who was sadly afraid of her uncle, would have burst into tears at some of his severe remarks, had not her cousin been present to give her courage to endure them. Even his presence might not have sufficed to repress her rising tears, for the snail's pace at which they progressed made the Squire more irritable than usual; but fortunately for her the pole of the carriage next to them in the rank was driven with such violence against them that it crushed the back panel, and justified the owner in calling to Wilkins to get down and let him out, in order to rebuke the coachman for his gross carelessness; from which he was diverted, however, by the apologies of the ladies who filled the interior of the offending vehicle.

At length Mrs. Price and her niece were placed under the charge of one of the proctors, and escorted into the theatre, where they were soon seated in the centre of the ladies' gallery. The Squire went round to

the door leading to the area which is set apart for masters of arts and strangers; and Owen Price, with Price Owen, who had been riding on the rumble with Wilkins, joined the throng of men who had to make their way into the under-graduates' gallery.

Mr. Price's temper was not improved by having to stand for nearly an hour in a dense crowd, waiting for the doors to be opened. He made many indignant speeches to his neighbours on the right and left; but, as they had not been introduced to him, they did not think it necessary to reply, which made him still more angry. At length, however, the bolts were withdrawn, and the doors thrown open. A rush ensued, and with a feeling of suffocation, a sense of painful oppression on his lungs, a throbbing of the heart and temples, as though they were about to burst, the Squire found himself in the midst of the area, and gazing on such an assemblage of beautiful women as he had never seen before.

The sight calmed his boisterous temper for a time; but the heat was so great, and the crushing so fearful, that he was about to

force his way out of the building, when a noise was heard like the charge of heavy cavalry over rocky ground, or the rumbling of a volcano before an eruption. The mass of people in the area, which had been waving to and fro like a corn-field in a gale of wind, stood immoveable, wondering what the awful sound could portend. Louder and louder it grew. Shrieks, cries, and groans were heard, mingled with the crash of broken glass, and loud shouts of "Go on, go on—air, air, give us air—break every window!"

The doors leading to the under-graduates' gallery had been opened, and the young men, eager to gain front seats, were so crowded together on the narrow staircases, that they impeded one another's progress. At length they gained the gallery, and rushed in with loud shouts; some had lost their caps, others had had their gowns torn off their backs—all were as wet with perspiration as if they had been dragged through a field of Swedish turnips on a dewy morning. What cared they for that? As soon as they had filled the gallery, they agreed to fill up the time that was

to elapse before the Chancellor would appear. The name of some political character was mentioned and received with shouts of applause, or groans and hisses, according to the estimation in which he was held by this portion of the rising generation of England. Then followed the names of the University authorities, the Vice-chancellor, Proctors, Pro-proctors, and Heads of Houses. The crews of the various boats were proposed amidst loud hurrahs, and then "The Ladies!" which elicited such a shout as fairly astounded the fair causers of it.

"Silence, silence! the Duke, the Duke!" screamed a man from the area. The theatre was as silent as the grave—a pin might have been heard to fall. The organ struck up a joyous air—the large doors in the centre of the building were thrown open. The procession entered, and Wellington took his seat in the Chancellor's chair.

What pen can describe the awful excitement of that moment! It was fearful—men cried as they shouted; the ladies stood trembling with agitation, as the tears ran from

their eyes; and for some ten minutes the Duke sat, nervously touching his parched lips with his tongue, and seemingly deeply affected by the scene before him.

At length he rose to open the business of the convocation. It was a signal for renewed shouts, which lasted so long, that he turned his eyes imploringly to the galleries, and was aided by the authorities present in trying to procure silence. All in vain—shout after shout rent the air, until the men were completely exhausted, and gave in from a physical inability to continue.

It is not my intention to give a detailed account of all that occurred on this memorable occasion. It is fresh in the memory of thousands, and will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. One circumstance I must record, for it made such an impression upon me as no lapse of time can erase. Among the many odes recited in the theatre, complimentary to the Chancellor, was one written and spoken by a clever youth, who ably alluded to all the scenes in which the Duke had been engaged. A vivid and heart-

stirring description of all his achievements in India, Spain, and France, was listened to in breathless silence ; but, when he ended his ode with the talismanic name of Waterloo, three thousand human beings rose as one individual, so simultaneous was the movement, and a shout was raised that was heard distinctly on Headington Hill. The Duke is said to have wept from excitement.

But I must return to my party.

Mr. Cadwallader Price had been one of the most energetic actors in the scenes I have faintly portrayed. He had shouted until he was hoarse, and applauded until his hands were sore. Had any one in his vicinity ventured to give utterance to a dissentient sound, he would assuredly have knocked him down ; but, as everybody was almost as enthusiastic as himself, he left the theatre in good humour with all the world, and waited for the ladies, the young men, and the carriage, without a murmur.

As soon as a change of dress was effected,

which was rendered necessary from the heat of the theatre, Owen Price took his friends to ——— College, where he had an invitation to an archery meeting and a luncheon in the gardens. The shooting was said to have been remarkably well executed; but, as Owen Price rather despised such performances, he amused himself with talking to his pretty cousin, until the “gentlemen sportsmen” laid aside their bows and arrows and escorted their fair visitors to the pavilion, where refreshments were prepared for them.

Pop—pop—pop—a perpetual popping was heard, as bottle after bottle of champagne was uncorked; indeed, so much of what was called champagne was imbibed in Oxford during this Commemoration week, that the price of perry rose in Herefordshire to an unprecedented height.

Mr. Price was thirsty; the wine was nicely iced. He drank with every lady near him; and when he had exhausted his fair friends, he challenged the gentlemen, and then began to cut jokes and make puns, and finally to

deliver complimentary speeches, which he might have prolonged to dinner-time, had not the gentlemen left him to resume their shooting, and taken the ladies with them; so that he was left with only one auditor, his unfortunate nephew, Price Owen, whom he held fast by the button of his coat until his oratory was exhausted.

A dinner at six o'clock, in the College Hall, was followed by a dance. Of course champagne flew about as liberally as possible, and of course the elderly gentlemen who did not join in the dance amused themselves with a quiet talk and a little claret in the common room. Old stories were raked-up, former pranks recorded, and many a sigh heaved to the memory of companions now "withered and gone."

To say that Mr. Price was in the least degree tipsy would be false, but he was excited by the events of the day, and a little overcome by the strength of his feelings and the number of toasts he had drunk. When eleven o'clock came he retired to his lodgings, with all his party, in one of those queer hu-

mours that men are wont to fall into when they have taken a little too much, and not quite enough to make them see everything in its brightest light. He was rather sleepy, and very prosy between his short naps. He would not go to bed, but would have a glass of soda water, and would give a long account of all the proceedings of the day, as he sipped it. At length he talked himself to sleep, and his son took the opportunity of begging his cousin Mary to sit down to the piano-forte and sing him a song.

Mary could not refuse. She struck a few chords, and was about to begin a little Welsh air, when her uncle woke up, and expressed his surprise that anybody should think of making a noise at that time of night, when, it was very evident, he was tired and anxious to go to bed. "But it is just like you girls—always wanting to show off!"

Mary explained that she was going to sing merely to oblige her cousin. Mrs. Price corroborated her explanation, and Owen Price and Price Owen gave their evidence to the same effect. The black cloud of ill-humour,

however, had spread itself over the mind of the old gentleman, and he grew so cross and peevish at last, that his wife took her niece by the arm and led her from the room.

“ There—there,” said the Squire, “ that is the way in which I am treated—not even a parting word—not even a good night.”

“ My dear father ; Mary—”

“ My dear uncle, my sister, I am sure—”

“ Is a good-for-nothing, ungrateful hussy. I will rid my house of her, and turn her out into the world to gain a livelihood as a governess.”

Owen Price was “ a chip of the old block ;” and his passionate disposition, which, according to some theories, he must have inherited from his father, was more uncontrollable than usual, from the excitement caused by the day’s proceedings, and the uncalled-for severity of the old gentleman’s remarks. In spite of all his cousin could do to prevent him, he “ made a clean breast of it,” as Old Bailey counsellors call making a confession, and revealed to his astonished paternity his love for his cousin, and his full de-

termination to make of her a Mrs. Price junior.

Cadwallader was too angry to speak ; he whistled vehemently for some minutes, and then rushed to the door, and screamed for his wife and niece to come back immediately. They, thinking that something very serious was going on, quickly made their appearance, and demanded the cause of their being summoned so loudly.

“Ask that young gentleman, madam, who is walking about there like a poet in a fit of inspiration,” said Mr. Price, thrusting his hands, according to his custom when enraged, to the very bottom of his pockets.

“What is the matter, my dear Owen?” said the mother.

“Cousin Owen, what have you done to offend your father so grievously?” inquired Mary.

“Only what I ought to have done long since—confessed my love for you, and my full determination to make you mine. I know that our affection is mutual, and that my

good mother will not throw any obstacles in the way of our union."

Owen seized Mary's hand as he spoke, and she threw herself upon his shoulder and wept. Mrs. Price and her brother bade her be comforted, and not give way to her tears.

"There, madam, there — you hear him; you see him — all this is vastly agreeable, when you, he, and she, know very well that I had set my heart on his marrying Miss Dorothea Williams, the owner of Dingley Park, that joins on to my estate — three hundred acres of freehold land, and without an incumbrance—you know it, madam."

"I know nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Price.

"Then you ought to have known it by instinct, madam!" said the Squire, bouncing his hand on the table.

"Dorothy Williams, sir!" cried Owen Price; "why, she is an old lady — thirty, if she is a day."

"Yes, sir, and has a thousand pounds in the funds for every year she has lived."

“I will not marry *her*, I am determined! If I am not allowed to marry my dear Mary here, I will live single all my life, and extinguish our branch of the family tree,” said Owen Price.

“Owen, dearest Owen, do not provoke my kind uncle. Say no more to-night, and permit me to retire,” sobbed Mary.

“Ay—retire—go, go—but hear me before you go. I shall order the carriage to the door at nine o’clock to-morrow morning, to leave Oxford. You will all be ready to accompany me, or dread my severest displeasure.”

Vain were expostulations or entreaties; the old gentleman remained firm, and Wilkins was sent for from the buttery, and sent, half intoxicated, and totally disgusted, to the Mitre, to order four horses on to Farringdon at nine in the morning. Lucy, who was tired to death with the gaieties of the day, was ordered to pack up immediately.

“Now, madam, you and your niece will be good enough to retire; and you boys will go home to your rooms, and be ready punctually

at nine in the morning. I shall order a chaise for you and your luggage to precede us, for I shall not lose sight of you."

The ladies, or rather the elder of them, tried her eloquence to induce her husband to remain and see the ceremony of the Installation completed; but the rage into which such a monstrous proposition, under the circumstances, threw the Squire, induced the whole party to obey his orders without further remark.

Owen Price would have followed the ladies, and endeavoured to persuade his cousin to elope with him that very night, and solicited his mother to accompany her as bridesmaid, and his cousin, Price Owen, to ride in the dickey, to be prepared to act as a father to give her away, using the cheque intended to pay his college bills to defray all the expenses to the north and back, had not his father put on his hat and insisted on seeing them to the door, and into the High Street, which he did just as Mr. Wilkins managed to stagger up to it, and say that the horses would be at the door at the hour named.

“What can be the matter with my uncle? I have seen him in a passion — a violent one, too — but I never saw him in such a rage as this before. He seems more like a madman than a rational being,” said Price Owen.

“I cannot tell, unless the common-room wine has disagreed with him, or the champagne turned acid on his stomach,” said Owen Price.

“Did he never suggest to you his wish that you should marry Dorothea Williams and her three hundred acres before?”

“Never. My dear fellow, you never saw Dorothy, did you?”

“Never.”

“Well, then, you never saw a plainer person in your life. She is half-educated, as vulgar as a housemaid, and as ugly as old Wilkins. If I marry her, may I—!”

“Say no more, but let us hope that a night’s rest and pleasant dreams may yet induce the governor to forget his anger, and stay out the Installation.”

Morning came; and the young men, having risen early to get their portmanteaus packed,

went to the lodgings of Mr. Price. He was up and ready to receive them, in a much worse humour than he had displayed on the previous evening. Mrs. Price assured them that she had not had an hour's sleep, as he had tossed and tumbled about in bed all night long, and talked of nothing but Dorothy Williams, three hundred acres of freehold property, thirty thousand pounds in the funds, and a very odd sensation about the pit of his stomach. Mary made the breakfast without saying a word; but her eyes showed that she had been crying. Wilkins walked the room as if eggs were strewed on the carpet and he was afraid of treading on them; and Lucy, the ladies'-maid, trembled when she came into the room.

"The bill!" screamed the Squire.

Wilkins flew, and returned with the print-seller, bearing the document in his hand.

"Infamous!"

"Really, sir, considering the few Installations that do occur in a man's life, I think—"

"And what business have you to think?"

There's your money, sir, and I hope it may do you good."

The printseller bowed, and retired hastily.

"Why is not the carriage at the door?"

"Hur is," said Wilkins.

"Then why didn't you say so?"

"Hur hadn't a chance."

In a few minutes all were embarked; and the heavy tub, preceded by a hack-chaise, took the road towards Bath, up the High Street, just as the gay crowds were assembling to go to the theatre, to view the second day's proceedings of the Installation.

Mrs. Price ventured to hint to Mary how much she should like to view them, when the angry Squire thrust his head out of the carriage-window and bade the boys drive faster, on pain of forfeiting their tips.

At every stage they travelled through, the Squire's temper got worse, and he complained, first of a severe pain, he could not tell where; at last, he confessed that he was ill—very ill—and had a most uncomfortable sensation in the ball of his great toe, for which he could not account. When they arrived at the York

House, in Bath, where they were to stop for the night, he went to bed at once, and a physician was sent for.

Dr. —— came, and was announced, but the Squire said “he would not see him or anybody. Bring me the paper, Wilkins, and do not let me be interrupted.”

Wilkins brought the “Bath Journal,” and sat down in the arm-chair by the bedside. For a few seconds all was quiet. Suddenly the Squire cried out, “Send for the doctor; I may as well let him poison me off at once, for all my hopes are ended — my plans are frustrated; that old cat, Dorothy Williams, has married her lawyer!”

It was true—Dorothy had eloped extraordinarily.

Dr. ——felt his patient’s pulse, asked him a multitude of questions, and, putting on an extra solemnity of face, pronounced the disorder to be an attack of gout.

“Gout?—impossible! I never had it before in my life,” said the Squire.

“Very probably,” said Dr. ——; “but, when elderly country gentlemen go up to

Oxford to witness an Installation, and indulge in under-graduate champagne, they must not be surprised if a fit of indigestion is converted into a fit of the gout."

Mr. Cadwallader Price was so very comfortable when the gnawing of ten thousand rats was no longer felt at his great toe, that he placed Mary's hand in his son's, and bade them be as happy for the remainder of their lives as he was at that moment.

The cousins never regretted the Squire's visit to the Installation.

CHAPTER IV.

BABBINGTON DRONEHAM, THE QUIETEST MAN
IN COLLEGE.

————— Impium
Lenite clamorem, sodales.

HORACE.

“ You are not gone to sleep ; indulging in sweet oblivion, as fine-talking ladies say ? ” inquired Great Tom.

“ I am as wide awake,” said I, “ as a detective-service police-officer on a dangerous duty.”

“ But you don’t laugh,” said Tom.

“ I respectfully beg leave to contradict you,” I replied ; “ I laugh within myself.”

“ Within *me*, you mean.”

“ Both. I am afraid to give vent to a regular burst.”

“ Afraid ? Why ? ”

“ Lest I should bring down the weight of your heavy displeasure upon me,” said I, “ and extinguish myself for ever.”

“ Pooh—pooh ! I am sound enough—as right as a mail-coach. I wish I may be shot if I ain’t ! These words remind me of a man who was up here—I don’t mean in this belfry, but up in college—some years since when there *were* such things as mail-coaches, whose guards called ‘ all right,’ and whose drivers kept time to a second. He was a nice young man—very particular nice. Shall I tell you his story ?”

“ If you will excuse me now,” said I, “ I would rather——”

“ Cut and run—slip off into bed ? I see—but you have not a chance. You have taken an inside place in my *rotonde*, and here you stop until Nox has done his work, and given up the reins to Phœbus Apollo.”

“ Then the story, by all means ; for it’s very hard lying——”

“ I am glad to hear you say so. Some men find it easier than speaking the truth.”

“ I mean lying here upon the floor,” said I.

“ Few men like to be floored, and as this

is your ‘first appearance on these boards,’ I have no doubt you feel a little queerish; but never mind, consider it a night rehearsal, when there is no fear of apples, orange-peel, or hisses from boxes, pit, or gallery.”

I began an expostulation, but the confounded hammer came down “Bom! bom! bom!” and as soon as the awful sound had made its escape through the windows to let the Oxford people know what o’clock it was, Tom commenced his kind tale thus:—

In a retired spot near the borders of Wychwood Forest lived one Mr. David Droneham. He cultivated his own estate—a small farm of some two hundred acres; that is, he fancied *he* cultivated it, though in reality the whole was under the management of a working bailiff. Giles Darman, though he was called a farming servant, was really his master’s master, and a very despotic master he was. David Droneham was a great agriculturist in theory; Giles Darman despised theory, and relied entirely on practice. If the master, who took in all the publications relating to agriculture that were

issued, hebdomadally, monthly, and annually, from the press, and was frequently taken in by the writers of them, ventured to purchase any new implement which was to work wonders at half the cost of time and labour required by the old implement, his man invariably pretended to be struck by its ingenuity and utility, and to have it damaged in some way or other the very first time its powers were tested. If a piece of wheat was to be drilled, the patent drill was sure to be found minus a wheel or an important screw, or something or other. If a rick was to be thrashed out in a day, the machine was sure to be out of order. The patent plough was noseless after a ten minutes' trial; and as to artificial manures, Giles had a method of rendering them valueless, and grinned maliciously in his master's face as he pointed out to him the "dead failure" of the acres on which they had been used.

David Droneham was vexed at the little success which attended his introduction of all the newest inventions, but he was not to be easily defeated. He tried and tried again,

until his machine-maker's bills for new engines and repairs of the same consumed the profits of the farm, and left him without an income to live upon.

Giles Darman grinned the more maliciously when his master proved to him from his books that he was losing money, and of course attributed it to his folly in not being satisfied to go on as his forefathers had done before him. The master uttered a bold *negatur*, but the man undertook to prove the truth of his premises and conclusion. A most illogical quarrel ensued, which ended in Giles Darman's being turned off by his indignant master, and another bailiff, a north countryman, an advertiser in some Farmer's Gazette or Journal, who boasted of having thoroughly acquired a knowledge of the theory and practice of agriculture, being engaged at a high salary in his place.

David Droneham would have been happy with his new bailiff, whose opinions so closely accorded with his own: but, whenever a new experiment was to be tried, a new live-labour-saving machine to be tested, the experimen-

talist was sure to see the face of Giles Darman, with a most contemptuous sneer upon it, grinning at him and his bailiff through the barn-doors, or a gap in a hedge-row. In vain did he warn him off his premises, serve him with notices of actions for malicious trespasses, and have him up before the magistrates. Giles despised the warnings, lighted his pipe with the notices, and showed a sovereign contempt of court as he paid his fines to the magistrates' clerk.

Unluckily, the season proved unfavourable to mangel-wurzel, Swedish turnips, and Italian rye-grass. The cattle, too, were blown by getting access to a field of patent clover that was to yield some ten or twelve tons to the acre; and at the gathering of the harvest the patent wheat, drilled in a patent way, was found to yield a mere nothing. Sad was the heart of David Droneham when he was compelled to acknowledge to his new bailiff that he must decline his valuable assistance for the future, from want of means to pay him his high salary, and to carry out his ingenious theories.

The bailiff could do no more than express his sorrow at being compelled, by adverse circumstances, to quit a master who was possessed of a mind so thoroughly unfettered by old-fashioned prejudices, and ask him for a written opinion of his conduct and abilities. This was readily given; and as David Droneham shook the experimental bailiff by the hand at parting, he heard a loud laugh in his rick-yard, and saw Giles Darman dancing with delight on the top of a patent winnowing-machine, and throwing his arms about like the sails of a windmill.

David was in a great passion, as well he might be. What should he do? Shoot him? It was a dangerous experiment, and might be attended with serious results. Should he let the great dog loose, and set him at him? Pooh! Tiger knew Giles better than his own master, and would not even show his teeth at him. He made up his mind to give his men a quart of his strongest beer all round, to thrash him with their flails; but he recollected that all the flails had been superseded by a patent thrashing-machine, and that his

men were in a sulky, rebellious mood at the introduction of his new-fangled nonsenses, which they firmly believed were invented to rob them of their means of living. David Droneham, therefore, wisely contented himself with shaking his fist at his tormentor, and rushed into his parlour to hide his indignation, and to examine into the state of his affairs.

The result of the examination induced him to put the writings, as title-deeds are called in the country, of his little estate into his pocket, and ride over to Charlbury, to consult his attorney about raising a certain sum of money upon them, to relieve him from his most pressing embarrassments.

The lawyer promised to supply "the needful," but at the same time seriously advised his client either to let the farm, and live upon the rent of it; or to take Giles Darman into his service again, and permit him to manage it on the old and successful plan. To the latter proposition a decided refusal was given: "he would die sooner than give such an impudent fellow such a triumph over him."

To the former plan, after much proing and coning, he assented : the farm was advertised to be let, and within ten minutes of the appearance on the barn-door of the bill which proclaimed the fact to the world of Wychwood, Giles Darman was in his former employer's parlour. *He* offered to become his tenant, and put down half-a-year's rent in advance ! This was too much : David looked at Giles, and at the yellow canvas bag that contained the money — money saved in his own service — and with a fearful oath bade him leave the room.

Giles only grinned : his old master rose from his seat, and bade him begone. Giles began an argument, but, before the first proposition had passed his lips, a huge leaden inkstand flew through the air and knocked him down. Before he could scramble up again, and cleanse his eyes and mouth from the ink, that filled them like an overflow of the river Niger, he felt a heavy horsewhip applied to his arms, back, head, legs, and face, as, in his convulsions and struggles to escape the blows, each part presented itself

to the view of the angry inflictor of the punishment.

Giles escaped as soon as David was exhausted, and presented himself in a shocking plight before the nearest magistrate, and demanded a warrant for the assault. The worthy justice, who had had to inflict many penalties on Giles for wilful trespasses upon his former employer's grounds, and knew what an impudent, aggravating rogue he was, refused to grant the warrant upon his mere *ipse dixit*, and without corroborative evidence. Giles first expostulated, then became abusive, and, at last, was turned out of the house by the magistrate's servants; who, in reply to his recitation of his ill-treatment, consoled him by telling him, in the words of a Wiltshire jury's verdict, that "it sarved him right."

Giles took his revenge thus: he stationed himself in the road that led to David's house, and accosted every farmer who rode over to look at the land to be let; and, after telling him that he had been bailiff on it for many years, left him with a full assurance that the farm

was not worth above half the rent that the owner asked for it. The consequence was, that David Droneham failed to get a tenant, and, from persevering in his new system of farming his land upon his own account, he became more deeply involved.

More money was advanced upon "the writings;" but David Droneham knew that such a mode of proceeding must ruin him at last. But what could he do? No one would take the farm, and he began to be convinced that he could not make it profitable himself unless he gratified Giles Darman, by returning to a system which he had deprecated and despised. That would never do. He thought and thought again, until it occurred to him that he might carry on the farm upon scientific principles, triumph over his old bailiff, and repay the moneys advanced upon the writings. How? By marrying a lady with the wherewithal.

David Droneham was doubly a widower: he had been married twice, and was rather advanced in life. Unlike his estate, he was without an incumbrance. He had never had

a child. David looked in his glass, and although he saw reflected a remarkably squat person, surmounted by a very ugly face, he did not despair. He dressed himself in his best white cords, newest top-boots, sprucest blue coat, and ordered his horse. Before he mounted, he bade one of his men catch a very fine peacock that was spreading its tail on the lawn, and bear it before him to the house of a wealthy widow lady, who dwelt on the confines of the parish of ———. The Widow Babbington, he knew, greatly admired this bird, for he had often seen her drive her pony-carriage slowly by his door to gaze upon its beauties. He was resolved that the bird should be the basis on which his claims should be rested, and thought it would do for a love-bird, as well as a Venus's dove.

The bird was conveyed safely, and David saw his man place it on the grass-plot before he knocked at the door. He saw the widow come out, and admire the proud bird as it strutted about with expanded tail. "Now or never," said he; and, ere she was aware of his presence, he was at the widow's side. An

invitation to drink tea was given and accepted; and David Droneham made such good use of his opportunity, that the widow thought him much less like an ourang-outang in the face when he left her, than she did upon his arrival. "*Repetatur haustus*," said David to himself, and the following day saw him at the widow's, to inquire after the peacock. Argus, with any one of his hundred eyes, would have seen that the widow was pleased with his polite attentions. David stayed to dinner and tea, and before supper had begun the siege in due form. The out-works were completed before he left, and in less than a month the citadel was taken. The peacock was carried back to its former home on the top of the carriage which conveyed its master and mistress from the parish church.

For six weeks David was a happy man, for he travelled about from place to place with his wealthy wife, and visited every model-farm he could hear of in his route. When he returned home from the wedding trip, he told his lady of all he meant to do in the way of farming. The north-country experimental

bailiff was to be sent for immediately, and an extensive order given for new patent ridging, turnip-cutting, and other machines, and wonders were to be done upon the land.

The lady listened attentively to all his plots and plans; and when they were fully disclosed to her, quietly told him that he should not play at ducks and drakes with *her* money, and squander it away, as he had done his own, upon a parcel of tomfooleries.

David was amazed; but he was still more amazed when he heard Mrs. Droneham recommend him, as the best thing he could do, to take Giles Darman into his service again, and let him manage the farm in his own way.

“I’ll suffer any torments sooner than consent to take that impudent fellow into my employment again. I never will consent to such a thing,” said David.

“Yes, you will, my dear, but take your own time about it.”

David held out for three long months, and then gave in. Mrs. Droneham had held a private talk with the village doctor, and en-

gaged a respectable old lady to be ready by about a certain day to take up her residence with her for a month or six weeks. He was likely to become a parent ! and Giles Darman had touched his hat respectfully as he complimented him on the pleasing prospect. All his former impudence was forgotten and forgiven. He was re-elected bailiff, and allowed to plough, sow, and thrash, as his forefathers had done before him. From that day David prospered, although he privately attributed Giles Darman's success on the farm to the mode in which he had tilled the land, while *he* had the power of cropping it and manuring it on scientific principles.

In due time a boy was born to his happy parents ; in due time he was christened, and called by his mother's name of Babbington, which was also her maiden name, as she had married her first cousin. The little fellow throve and grew rapidly, and was one of the quietest and best-conducted children at the age of ten years that could be found in the neighbourhood of Wychwood Forest. Then, alas ! he lost his mother, who took care to have all

her fortune settled upon her child, fearing lest David, as soon as he was a free agent, should make ducks and drakes of it by resuming his tomfooleries. The widower-for-a-third-time had no such designs. He was cured of his rage for novelties by prospering under the old system; but then he would call Babington "a *model* child," and that made his mother suspect that he was secretly thinking of a "model farm."

Master Babington Droneham had never been out of his mother's sight since he was born, except when he was in bed; and then, to be safe, he slept in a sort of closet within her own room. He had been petted, though not spoiled, in the usual sense of that word. She had taught him nearly all she knew herself, so that he could read, write, and cipher, as well or better than most children of his age. All boyish sports, however, had been forbidden. Bats, balls, tops, and marbles, he knew only by name; but he could amuse himself with a needle, a pair of scissors, and a sheet of paper, as well as a little girl; and could cut ladies out of pocket-books, and

colour them to the life. All his pursuits had been sedentary; for he never went out but with his mother. He was not allowed to stroll about the farm with his father, lest he should get his clothes dirty and his feet wet. In short, he was what Giles Darman pronounced him to be—"a little mollycoddle."

Giles resolved to, what he called, "save the boy, and make a man of him."

"I wonder, sir," said he to his master, "that you don't send that little fellow out to school."

"Never, Giles—his mother's wish was that he should be educated at home, and then sent up to Oxford," replied David Droneham.

"To be made a parson of, I suppose."

"Your supposition is a wrong one, then; Master Babbington Droneham is to be brought up as a gentleman, like his father."

"Upon scientific principles?" inquired Giles. His master gave Giles a look that reminded him of a certain leaden inkstand and a heavy horsewhip, so he said no more on that subject.

“I really think the young gentleman (a stress on the latter word) looks as if he wanted fresh air. His cheeks are as white as a turnip, and they tell me he don’t know a plough from a harrow. If you were to let him walk about the farm with you, sir, it would do him good.”

“His mother always dreaded damp feet,” said the father.

“Then order him a thick pair of boots, sir; rely upon it, a little out-door exercise will do him good.”

David Droneham thought the matter over in his mind, and felt convinced that what Giles had suggested was the best plan to pursue. Master Babbington, therefore, soon appeared in a dress suitable for following his father to the field; and, when once the boy had fully tasted the sweets of freedom and fresh air, nothing could keep him within the house. He was here, there, and everywhere, in fine weather and foul; and, as he had no playfellows meet for him, he associated with the plough-boys and men about the farm. They were astonished at his gross ignorance of

all boyish sports, and earnestly set about initiating him into the mysteries of taws and alleys, cricket and football, and such other games as they themselves delighted in. Giles, moreover, "put him up to" a great many things of which he had better have remained ignorant altogether, or, at all events, for many years to come; for he taught him to ferret rats and rabbits, to trap birds and wire hares, and even to shoot flying; but, worst of all, to do all these things, and never to let his father or anybody else know that he could do them.

This was the boy's first lesson in the art of deceiving, and so well did he learn it, that neither David Droneham, nor any of the family within doors, had the most distant notion how his time was employed. If he robbed the henroosts and sucked the eggs, he put back the shells and gave the rats the credit of the robbery. He kept ferrets and rat-dogs, but it was down at Giles Darman's cottage. His gun and his fishing-tackle were never seen at home, and he always had a tale ready to account for any extraordinary absence from the house or any peculiar appear-

ance in his outward boy. To the servants and his father he appeared unchanged, except in his healthy looks and daily-strengthening frame. If he went out with his father to spend an evening with a neighbour, he was so well-behaved and smooth in his demeanour, and so very innocent in his remarks, that he acquired the title of the quietest little boy in the county.

Giles was quite delighted with his success as a tutor, but did not think his pupil's education completed, until he had taught him to smoke and drink with him, and sing "'Tis my delight of a shiny night," with proper emphasis and due effect. The boy soon acquired these arts, and could manage a pipe and toss off his glass as well as his tutor. But at home he never indulged in the least excess. If he got a little excited at Giles's cottage, he stole home by a backway, and crawled up to bed, pleading a headache in excuse.

For two years the boy was left to the evil influence of Giles Darman, and had become, unsuspected, a most perfect little scamp. Only

once did he forget the lesson of dissimulation taught him by his tutor. A neighbour who had been dining at the farm, as he sat over his wine, of which Babbington had quietly and unobservedly taken a larger share than ordinary, remarked that he was annoyed by his pointer having taken to killing his own mutton.

“Cure him in five minutes,” cried the boy, in a tone that no one but Giles had ever heard before. “Shut him up in a barn with an old ram, and he will either butt his breath out or give him a lesson he will never forget. He won’t look a grass-nibbler in the face again.”

David Droneham and his guest stared at the quietest little boy in the county; but Babbington saw his mistake, resumed his quiet tone instantly, and meekly told his father that he had found the prescription in a dictionary of agriculture. He then left the room, and ran down to Giles to tell him how he had “queered the old ones.”

“Grass-nibbler! hum!” said the guest; “I don’t think I ever saw a sheep called by that name in any of my reading.”

“Nor I,” said the father. “He must have caught it of the boys.”

“I wonder you do not send that nice little quiet fellow to school.”

“I promised the late lamented Mrs. Droneham not to send him from home,” replied David, looking very widowery.

“Then, I would have a tutor for him. He is getting quite old enough for Latin and Greek,” said the guest. “The boy shoots well.”

“What!” screamed David; “he never *saw* a gun to my knowledge, except the old musket used by the bird-keepers against the rooks.”

“All I can say is, that I saw him cut down a partridge in your nine-acre piece as cleverly as I could do it myself. It was not the first he had killed either, by the skillful way in which he twisted the bird’s neck, turned it under his wing, and pocketed it.”

“Impossible! you must have been mistaken.”

“Oh dear, no! I saw him as plainly as I see you, and admired him for his skill. What does he do with his pocket-money?”

“ I do not know—I never thought to ask him,” said David, quite disconcerted.

“ Hum !” said the guest, but dropped the subject, as it seemed an unpleasant one.

David Droneham questioned Babbington before he went to bed that night; but the boy denied the charge so quietly, and gave such a truth-seeming account of the way in which he disposed of his allowance, that it almost satisfied his father that his guest must have been mistaken. He could not, however, help thinking about the boy before he went to sleep more, perhaps, than he had ever done before. The result of his meditations was, that as soon as he had finished his morning meal he mounted his horse, and rode over to the rectory of an adjoining parish.

The house was occupied by the curate, a quiet, pious, single-hearted man, who—to relieve the disorder common to curates, and aggravated in his case by a sick wife and a large little family—poverty—took pupils, and devoted all the hours he could spare from

his parish to their mental and moral improvement.

Mr. David Droneham wished, by an offer of a liberal salary, to induce this gentleman to attend his son at home for a certain number of hours daily ; but his other engagements would not permit of such an arrangement. It was finally settled that Babbington should attend at the rectory, and take lessons with the other pupils.

The boy was not sorry to hear of the plan adopted by his father ; for he longed to associate with boys of his own rank in life, and wished to learn something of the world in which he was to live, when he came into his property, of which Giles had given him a very much magnified account. Had he had any unpleasant feelings about the matter, they would have yielded to his delight at the thought of having a pony kept for him to ride to and fro daily, and on which he had fully made up his mind to take a gallop with a pack of harriers, that were kept a few miles off. Giles had often suggested to him that he never would be a perfect sportsman

until he could ride up to hounds; but neither tutor nor pupil could suggest a plan by which a nag could be obtained for the purpose. The difficulty was now removed, and the boy was resolved to profit by it.

At the end of a month's attendance at the rectory, the following conversation took place between Master Babbington, not yet thirteen years of age, be it remembered, and Giles Darman, which I record, as it will show how well he had profited by Giles's tuition, and give a bird's-eye view of his daily proceedings.

"How do you get on? Dost like Greek and Latin?"

"Toll-loll—it's up-hill work; but I'll accomplish it. I am not to be beaten by a set of muffs, who don't know a stoat from a weazel."

"How do you like your master?"

"Oh! well enough. He's very clever, I think, and very kind; but *so* easily gammoned! I can make him believe anything. He, like the old one, and the rest of the fools about him, believes me to be the quietest little

boy in the county. I have only to say, 'Papa's compliments, and begs you'll excuse me to-morrow,' and he believes it as readily as if it were the truth."

"What a spoony!" said Giles.

"I had a capital go yesterday: a run of an hour and a half, and only got spilt once."

"Did you kill?"

"Oh! yes:" and Babbington gave a splendid account of the run, and told it in sporting phrases that would not have disgraced an old thistle-whipper.

"What sort of boys are they up at Rectory?"

"Muffs, I tell you, mere bookworms. I've sounded them all, and they know no more of horses, dogs, or anything else worth knowing, than if they had never left their mothers' apron-strings. But I have not let them into any of my secrets, nor do I intend to do so. Close and quiet, that's my plan. Fill me a pipe, and give me some grog."

Giles Darman slapped his pupil on the back, and obeyed.

For three years the young lad carried on

his plan of deception unsuspected ; for his tutor heard nothing in the shape of gossip at the rectory or in his parish ; and David Droneham, who was beginning to feel the effects of old age, toddled about his farm as much as he could, and when he went in to dinner, he ate it, and fell asleep over a book or a paper. He seldom saw any visitors, and those he did see generally came upon business, and took their departure as soon as it was concluded. He was, therefore, quite satisfied that his son was going on quietly, and just as he wished him to go on.

To do the boy justice, he really worked hard at his books, and made a greater progress in his classics than his fellow-pupils, for he did not choose to be beaten in anything he undertook. Moreover, it was a part of his plan to work when he sat down to work, in order that he might have more leisure to sport.

Just at the commencement of his seventeenth year, at the end of which he was to go to college, contrary to the advice of his tutor, who wisely urged his father not to let him go

into residence until he was nineteen, his views of life were changed. A young man, his senior by one year, who had retired from a public school to save a sentence of expulsion for some grave offence against the discipline of the establishment, came down for a year's tuition under the curate of——.

Cecil Darell was a scion of a good family, tall, handsome, and of winning manners, not vicious, but as mischievous as a monkey, and as daring as an Old Westminster. He was just the reverse of Babbington Droneham, for he never acted the hypocrite; but what mischief he did he did openly, and never denied it when taxed with it. He scorned a lie, and would rather have taken the blame of another's fault than screened himself by betraying a friend.

Babbington was greatly pleased with Cecil, and listened to his stories, of the scrapes he had got into and out of, the feats he had performed, and the tricks he had played, with that wrapped attention which never fails to please a youthful narrator. But Droneham, with his usual caution—cunning would be a

better word—did not repose any confidence in or betray himself to Darell, until he had involved him in a scrape which ensured his secrecy on any subject he might choose to entrust to him. When they mutually understood one another, Cecil was disgusted at the low habits and associates of his companion, and told him so. Giles Darman was soon after this surprised to find his company shunned by the boy whom he had instructed, and meditated a betrayal of all that had occurred between them to the father. He thought better of it, however, for the disclosure might have been attended by serious consequences to himself; and his place was too good a one to be risked merely for the sake of taking vengeance on a boy, who would not smoke or drink with him, or kill game for his profit.

The boys hunted, fished, and ferreted on the sly, and even stole into Kinch's hotel now and then, and had a bottle of wine; but beyond that, and stealing away to a coursing match, or a game of cricket at Woodstock, in Blenheim Park, they engaged in nothing

which might fairly be deemed objectionable. They went up together with the curate of ——, to enter at Christ Church and to be matriculated; and, while the tutor took his quiet mutton-chop at the Mitre, Cecil contrived to introduce Babbington to a few of his old schoolfellows, and to show him what a very lively affair a college luncheon is when kindred spirits meet together, and how superior champagne is, as an exhilarator, to any other vinous or spirituous compound. They were both to go into residence in the same term, and both eagerly longed for the day to arrive that was to see them emancipated from the true *status pupillaris*.

The time at length arrived. Cecil Darell and Babbington Droneham took possession of their rooms in Peckwater Quadrangle. Cards were left, invitations given to breakfast, dinner, and wine-parties, and both were delighted with the liberty they enjoyed. There was this difference, however, in the young men. Cecil was always getting into scrapes for knocking in late, cutting chapel or lecture or being seen in a row; while Babbington

was never known to knock in after hours, miss chapel, or be absent from lecture. It was a part of his old system : the leaven of Giles Darman's spirit still working in him, and, like all hypocrisy, it answered for a time.

"What account do you give of our new members, Mr. ——?" said the dean to one of the college tutors; "Mr. Droneham and Mr. Darell, for instance?"

"Mr. Darell is the better scholar of the two, and might ensure a high degree if he were but steady ; but I fear we shall have to punish him severely for his irregularities ere long."

"And Mr. Droneham?"

"Not very brilliant, but very attentive to his duties ; indeed, from all I have heard of him, I believe him to be the quietest man in college."

On the following morning, Babbington Droneham was invited to breakfast with the dean, to meet some of the quiet men. He dressed himself so artistically, and behaved with such propriety, that he left the dean

with a full conviction on his erudite mind that his house had met with a treasure in so exemplary a young man. Had he seen him exchange his sober suit of black with a white tie, for a green cutaway coat and spicy neck-cloth, and mount the tandem which waited for him, when lectures were over, at least a mile out of Oxford, he might have formed a more accurate opinion of the young commoner's character ; but deans have no chance of seeing such things, or the system would soon be put an end to.

Cecil Darell, I am sorry to say, was rusticated for two terms for giving a noisy party in his rooms, which ended with a little bonfire in the quad ; while Babbington Droneham, who had been the first to suggest the *finale*, and the most active in dismembering sofas, chairs, and tables, to carry it out, was not even suspected to have been present at the party or the fire.

When Cecil's banishment was over, he returned to Oxford, and found his friend still in high favour with the authorities, and bearing his old title of the quietest man in col-

lege, although he rode races in Port Meadow, larked over the country, and hunted the Gehazi hounds, drove tandems, gave spreads, and, moreover, took lessons in sparring of professionals from London, and tested his progress in the fistic art by picking quarrels with the rustics who tried to prevent him from galloping over their master's wheat, or making gaps in the mounds. He got better shooting than any man in Oxford; and, although he poached upon all the best manors round, he, somehow or other, never was caught.

Cecil could not think how his friend managed; but, as I said before, Babbington never neglected a college-duty, never exhibited himself in any other costume in the University but such as was worn by the quiet men. If he gave a party, it was never in his own rooms, but at a pastrycooks or an hotel. His scout was not admitted to any one of his secrets; and, if any signs of a disturbance were exhibited likely to require the proctor's interference, he was the first to leave the party and seek his own well-arranged and soberly-furnished rooms.

To a certain set only, and that not a very extensive one, but one on whose members he could depend for secrecy, were his wild and dissolute habits known. He never went out of college, or was seen in the streets without his cap and gown, which were readily exchanged at some man's lodgings at the extremity of the town, and resumed when he returned from his ride or his drive.

Cecil adopted his friend's plan, and found the benefit of it. His character was held in higher estimation by the university authorities, but he despised himself for the hypocrisy which he practised. He was obliged, however, to practise it, or give up all his fun; for he knew that if he were found out in a second breach of discipline, his previous rustication would ensure his expulsion.

Both the young men came up in the Michaelmas Term of their second year, after having spent the long vacation together at David Droneham's, near Wychwood Forest, where they sported—that is, shot, fished, and hunted—undisguisedly, with the consent of their friends and neighbours. They went up

for their first examination, and passed it very creditably on the same day. Of course, it was requisite to give a pass-party. Cecil, in spite of Babbington's advice, gave his party in his own rooms, and invited every man whom he knew. The consequence was that the party went off badly, and ended in a riot, for which he got summoned before a seniority, and severely imposed—being confined to gates and chapel until the task was done. Babbington gave his party at the Mitre, and confined his invitations to his own set. His dinner and wines cost him less than the wines and desert alone cost Cecil; and the party passed off, noisily it is true, but without any unpleasant results beyond headaches and loss of appetites at breakfast on the following morning, which were set right and restored by a gallop to Abingdon, and a luncheon at "The Thistle."

The dean sent for Babbington just before he mounted his hackney, and, seeing his pallid looks, told him he was afraid he had read a little too hard, and begged of him to relax a little, lest his health should suffer

materially ; and, after having been complimented on the respectable manner in which he had passed his little-go, and on his general quiet and student-like conduct in college, he rushed out of my gate to the stables, mounted his nag, and made "his set" laugh by describing his scene with the dean.

Babbington now thought that his character was so firmly established, that he might follow the dean's advice, and "relax a little" from his excessively cautious behaviour. He was anxious to try his skill in boxing with a notorious scamp, a bargeman who dwelt in that nest of infamy, St. Thomas's parish, and who had grown quite unbearable in his conduct to the gownsmen, from never having been successfully opposed and punished as he deserved.

There had been two or three skirmishes in the streets, as there generally used to be in the month of November some few years ago, and there was every probability of their leading to a town-and-gown fight. The Big Bargeman was sure to be found leading on a set of low fellows ; and Babbington Drone-

ham expressed his intention of seeking him out, and trying his science with him. Cecil, although he was confined to chapel and gates, was fully bent, contrary to his friend's wishes and advice, on going out to see the result of the trial. An opportunity was soon afforded him.

He had a few friends dining with him one evening about seven o'clock, among whom were Babbington, and some others of their own set. The second bottle of claret was just *unforked*—for the corkscrew, like all college corkscrews, was missing—when a rush, as of many feet, a rumbling sort of noise, like distant thunder, or the rolling of the waves on a pebbly beach, was heard mingled with obscure shouts and cries, which grew louder and louder, and at last resolved themselves into distinct sounds of “Gown, gown! Town, town!”

At the well-known, spirit-stirring sounds, every man sprang to his feet.

“They come, they come!” shouted one.

“On with your caps and gowns, lest friends mistake us for foes,” cried another.

“ Let us go out of college before an order is given by the dean to close Tom and Canterbury Gates,” suggested a third.

“ Now, Babbington, screw up your courage to the sticking-place,” said Cecil; “ for be assured the Big Bargeman leads them on.”

“ I am ready for the fray,” said Babbington; “ but I must not be known. Lend me your frock-coat and a blue tie. Now, then, that will do. Instead of a commoner’s gown, find me a student’s; and then for the honour of Oxford and the credit of Tom Spring.”

This was said, and the alterations in dress made in half the time it has taken me to describe the scene. One bumper round to the success of “ The Gown,” and down flew the young men; and, scampering across quad, through Peckwater and out of Canterbury-gate, rushed to the left up Oriel Lane. They found themselves in a mob of some two or three hundred people. Some were erect, some sprawling, while others were hitting out at, or stopping, the blows of their adversaries amidst the shouts of victory or the groans of

defeat. As soon as the accession of friends from Christ Church was seen by the gownsmen, a louder shout of "Gown, gown!" rent the air. The foes retired for awhile, and took up their station between St. Mary's Church and the lodgings of the Principal of Brazenose.

"A charge, a charge!" shouted Babington. "I see the champion of St. Thomas's."

"A charge, a charge!" cried Cecil, seconding his friend.

"A charge, a charge!—on gown, on!" screamed a hundred voices; and, like a stone hurled from an engine, the university men sprang forward upon the enemy, and, by sheer weight and pluck, dislodged them from their position, and sent them flying in scattered parties into the midst of Radcliffe Square.

The Bargeman fought well, and tried to rally his forces; but what could bone, beer, and tobacco, effect against youth, high-blood, and generous wine? Every time the town—as the *οἱ πολλοί* called themselves, though no *respectable* townsmen ever joined in open and

unseemly enmity against the university-men—rushed to the attack, they mere met with rap, rap! bang, bang! right and left, left and right, and quickly sent back again amidst their discomfited companions.

“Forward, forward! show them no quarter,” said Babbington; “round some of you, by Exeter, the Park, and Broad Street, and outflank them.”

Away scudded Cecil, understanding his friend’s tactics in an instant, round by the way pointed out, summoning the Lincoln, Jesus, Exeter, and Trinity men in his way; and, just as the Bargeman and his crew were flying from the foe in front, and trying to reach Wadham and the Parks, and so escape, he fairly hemmed them in; and then began the fiercest of the fight.

“Gown, gown! Town, town!” Blows fell thick and fast amidst the inspiring cries. The shrieks of the wounded were heard amidst the shouts of the victors; laughter was mingled with groans; and curses both loud and deep issued from the lips of the defeated St. Thomas’s men.

“ On, on, forward !” shouted Babbington ;
“ victory—they yield, they yield !”

“ Press on them, keep them in !” screamed Cecil, as he cut off the retreat of some who would have scampered off down College Lane. “ Don’t let a man escape.” Whack, whack ! thump, thump ! rap, rap ! and Cecil found himself engaged with two or three big fellows, who, if they had had any science, would have overpowered him ; but he fought well, struck out straight from his shoulder, while his opposers threw away their roundly-delivered blows on the air. “ Hurrah ! Give it to them ! A charge, a charge !”

The charge was effective ; and Cecil found not only time to breathe, but his gown, or rather another man’s gown that he had borrowed, torn to shreds, and his cap-board smashed to atoms.

“ At them again,” cried he ; “ charge !—another charge, an you love me ! and we are ——”

“ Your name and college, sir,” said a proctor, laying his hand upon Cecil’s shoulder.

“ Smith, of New-inn Hall,” said Cecil, as

he left his tattered gown in the proctor's hands, ducked into the thickest of the crowd, and whispered audibly, "The proctor, the proctor!—cut and run."

In an instant hostilities were suspended, and what had been a thickly-mingled crowd became mere flying scattered clouds of frightened individuals.

Sauve qui peut—Anglicé, the devil take the hindmost—was the favourite motto with both town and gown, for the proctor was a foe common to both parties. Some were caught, and sent home to their respective colleges, under the care of a bull-dog (as the proctor's man is called), if they were gownsmen; if the captured were townsmen, they were handed off into durance vile for the night, and "had up" in the morning.

But I must return to my hero, Babbington Droneham. He was dreadfully irate at the inopportune approach of the university peace-keeper, for he had just reached his marked foe, the terrific Bargeman; and even amidst the confusion of the *mêlée*, contrived to let him know that he was anxious to try his

powers in a single combat, in a ring, composed of friends and enemies, who, Englishmen-like, would be sure to see fair play—nay, the ring was actually being formed, when the cry of “proctor” reached them.

“Never mind,” said Droneham, “we will manage it yet. Away up High Street, and down the Butcher Row. I will meet you opposite the Castle-gates.”

“Done,” said the Bargeman; and he willingly retired with his party to the spot indicated, which was close to his own realms, wherein he reigned despotically.

Even in the midst of this scene of excitement, Babbington could not forget the cunning taught him by Giles Darman. He smoothed his ruffled feathers, and watched what was going on in the immediate neighbourhood of the proctor. His quick eye discerned Cecil as he escaped, or rather tried to escape, from the active marshal. His foot was put out just before the marshal’s legs, as if by chance; and, as he fell heavily to the ground, Darell dived into a body of men, and was safe.

A second glance showed Babbington a very large operative in the act of punishing a bulldog, by battering with his huge fist his head, which was held, as by a vice, under his arm.

“ Loose your hold, fellow ! that is a proctor’s man,” said Droneham.

“ I’ll see you at York first,” said the operative, weaving away at the poor man’s head more vigorously than ever.

“ Then take that—and that—and that !” Each *that* closed an eye, or sanguinified a nose ; and, just as the proctor came up, the operative was on his back on the pavement, crying for mercy.

“ Your name and college, sir ? What is the meaning of this ?” said the proctor.

“ Droneham of Christchurch, sir,” replied Babbington, capping the official most respectfully ; “ I was going quietly home to my college, to tea, when I saw that very rude individual there ill-using your follower, so I rescued him, sir.”

“ Ay, that he did, sir, and if he hadn’t adone it I should never have been fit for nothing no more, for the snob had got my

head in chancery, and was taking his costs out of it before judgment was given," said the bull-dog.

" Mr. Droneham, I am very much obliged to you : your conduct shall be reported to the dean. The university thanks you through me, its officer ; but, go home to college now, or you may get hurt."

Babbington capped the proctor more humbly than before, and expressed his delight at having been able to assist so excellent a servant of the university. The proctor returned the capping, and went off to his duties, while Babbington, the moment he was out of his sight, scampered off as fast as he could to meet the Bargeman opposite the Castle-gates. As he turned into the High Street, he saw poor Cecil, capless and gownless, and almost stripped, in the hands of a pro-proctor. Cecil saw him, and begged him to rescue him, or he should be expelled. Droneham gazed on him as if he knew him not ; turned up his eyes as if disgusted at his depravity, and walked quietly on until he was out of the pro.'s sight, and then resumed his running.

The Bargeman was true to his appointment. He was standing stripped, ready for the fight, before the spot fixed upon, and surrounded by a ring made up of gown and town, who had laid aside their hostile feelings, and were as quietly betting with one another, on the result of the contest, as if they had not exchanged a blow.

In an instant Babbington's gown and cap, coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth were off, and given to the care of a bystander. No sparring took place, for both combatants were in earnest. The one was bulky and unwieldy, but possessed of immense strength; the other was tall, thin, and wiry, and as active as a kitten, and trained "on scientific principles," as his father would have said.

The battle did not last long, for, to the great surprise of his former admirers, the hero of St. Thomas's could not hit his adversary; whereas, Droneham was planting blows upon his enemy's head, which seemed to fall, first on one side, then on another; now in front, then behind; as if the administrator had the power of being ubiquitous.

When, after a blow, planted "on scientific principles," just under the left ear, the Barge-man fell to the ground, and confessed that he had had enough, a shout rent the air, and the victor received the sincere congratulations of all the spectators.

"Hurrah, hurrah! the bully is beaten!" said Babbington, as he looked round for the man who held his clothes for him.

"Mr. Droneham, of Christchurch!" said the proctor; "is it possible?"

Babbington tried to get up a lie, but he could not; he was confused. He tried to speak the truth, but he could not, for he had not been used to do so. He stood confounded.

"You will call on me, sir, to-morrow morning at ten. James, see this gentleman-fighter to his rooms."

James assisted him in putting on his clothes, and left him not until he had seen him safely deposited within my gate, and then ascertained from the porter whether the name he had given to the proctor was the right name or not.

“Certainly,” said Cerberus, “that is Mr. Babbington Droneham, the quietest man in college.”

“The deuce he is!” said James. “I never should have thought it. He fights like a *fancy-man*.”

“And what was the result?” said I to Great Tom.

“Cecil Darell was expelled. Many other men were rusticated, but Babbington Droneham’s story was believed—‘that he had mistaken his way to college, and turned round the Butcher Row in his haste to gain his rooms, because he was the quietest man in college, and only fought in his own defence.’”

“And so humbug was rewarded,” said I.

“No, it was not,” replied Great Tom; “for, after awhile, the truth came out—*magna est*, you know the rest. All Giles Darman’s lessons in cunning were thrown away, and his pupil expelled the university, for he . . . —(but that’s a secret)—and laid the blame upon one of his most intimate friends.”

“ What became of Giles Darman ? ” I inquired.

“ He was prosecuted by ‘ the quietest man in college ’ for snaring hares on his estate after he came into possession of it, upon the death of poor David Droneham, and gave up the ghost in prison and in disgust at his pupil’s ingratitude.”

“ And Cecil Darell ? ”

“ Went into the army, fought like a man as he was, and cut ‘ the quietest man in college ’ for the remainder of his days.”

CHAPTER V.

THE ELECTION.

Nul ne sait si bien où le soulier blesse, que celui que le porte.—*Old Proverb.*

“Yaw-aw-awh!” uttered I, at the completion of the tale that Tom toll’d last.

“What do you mean by that? Do you wish to insult me? I’ll call you out,” said Tom.

“I wish you would,” said I, internally, “for I see no other chance of getting out.”

“I can stand fire, I can tell you: witness my excessive coolness when our house was in a blaze, and my old friend on the right—the Hall and its neighbours—were burnt down. I was rather alarmed, I confess to you, when they turned me into an alarm-bell; but though my clapper went faster than ever it

did before or since, and I made a deuce of a clamour, I can assure you I am no coward. What is your objection to my last tale?"

"Too much fighting in it," said I: "whack, whack — rap, rap; you understand me, of course."

"Of course I do; but I strike so often myself, that I rather admire the propensity when displayed by others. It is not unnatural surely that I, Great Tom, should have an attachment to *bell-a, horrida bell-a*. Eh? If I ever marry, I shall choose an *Isabella*: that is not unnatural, either. Eh?"

"Not at all," said I; "but pray don't pun, especially in Latin; I am so cold and uncomfortable, that I shall be glad of a translation."

"I twig," replied Tom, "but you have not a chance. It is not often that I get a friend to pass the night with me, and when I do I must make the most of him. You are a capital listener—an invaluable acquisition to a story-teller. Just fancy yourself Lalla Rookh, and me Fadladeen, in the book written by my namesake, Tom ——."

“No *more* of that, pray,” said I; “but if you have any thing worth hearing, begin.”

“Don’t be in a hurry — here comes the hammer — a relation of Hammer Lane, no doubt, for he hits so hard; but it’s only a little quarter — blow — there — ‘bom!’ — it’s all over. Make yourself as cozy as you can while I my tale unfold.”

On the coast of Suffolk stands a church, so conspicuously placed on a hill that it is a most useful landmark to sailors. By bringing it in a line with the steeple of another church, which is built upon the very verge of the marshes, the navigator is enabled to avoid a most dangerous bank of sand, on which many a vessel with its crew has been wrecked.

The name of the parishes which boasted of these churches was Darrington; but, to distinguish them, the one was called Darrington Major, and the other Darrington Minor, in the records of the diocese. The rurals who dwelt around them designated them, to save time and breath, I presume, as Great Darr. and Little Darr. If a stranger inquired for

Darrington Major or Minor, he was answered by a stare and an "Anan, sir?" and on repeating his inquiry, was gravely told that there was no such place thereabouts. Neither of these churches could claim what is legitimately called a village. The congregations who attended them came from some scattered farmhouses, and a few labourers' cottages. The only house within a convenient distance of either place of worship was the rectory of Great Darr., and a small cottage, which served as a lodge to the rectory, in which dwelt the man—a common farm-labourer—who officiated as the parish clerk. The nearest house to the rectory and this official's abode was situated at the distance of a mile at least.

Both of these parishes were in the gift of the Crown. The income arising from the larger one was good—say, some five hundred pounds per annum; but the smaller one, in olden times, was barely worth one hundred and fifty pounds, and had no residence attached to it. As a set-off to this, however, the duties were lighter than the income; for,

except in the very driest days of a very dry summer, the church was not approachable, except by a boat. As all the parishioners of Little Darr. lived nearer to Great Darr. church than to their own parish church, it was an understood thing between them and their pastor that the church of Little Darr. should be closed during nine months of the year, and that they should attend the service in the more convenient and approachable church of Great Darr.

From custom, the rector of Great Darr. was always appointed to the curacy of Little Darr., because the incumbent of the latter parish could not by any possibility become a resident. There was no glebe whereon to build, and no residence to be obtained in the parish. Oddly enough, an instance had never been known, even in the traditionary annals of the oldest inhabitant, of the two livings having been held by the same individual; and, still more oddly, the two livings had never, in the memory of man, fallen vacant in the official lifetime of any one Lord Chancellor.

Little Darr. was always looked upon as the

last object of an aspirant's hopes. If it was vacant, every applicant for the Crown's favours, in the way of church preferment, happened to be from home, and did not answer the letter in which he was told that the Lord Chancellor had fortunately an opportunity of obliging Mr. So-and-so, by offering him a small living in the gift of the Crown. It was the most agreeable thing possible for the gentleman who held the seals that Little Darr. should be at his disposal, or rather for his private secretary, for he had fewer letters to write in answer to applications for preferment, when this vacancy occurred, than at any other period.

When Great Darr. "fell in," as it is called, the applications were numerous, and every prudent seal-bearer gave it away immediately to the first man on his list. The house was good, the situation delightful, and the duties very light; it insured also, as I have said before, the curacy—nearly a sinecure—of the adjoining parish of Little Darr.; it had, moreover, attached to it a snug glebe—some sixty acres of the best land in the parish—which

was rented, above its value, by the principal landowner, because it was the only bit of really good pasture land for miles round.

Darrington Major was therefore looked upon as what is termed one of the Chancellor's best things.

As I have described the parish, it will now be necessary for me to give a brief sketch of the incumbent thereof, and a short account of how he was lucky enough to obtain so desirable a living.

Demetriades Finney was a Cambridge man, and by unparalleled exertions succeeded in getting what Cambridge men call the "wooden spoon." This spoon exists not materially ; "shape it hath none ;" but it is metaphorically used to illustrate what members of the sister university term "a close shave." The man who so narrowly escapes "a pluck" as to wonder at his luck in getting his *testamur*, and is placed in the lowest depth of the examination-list, is, by a figure of speech peculiar to the Cantabs, said to carry off the wooden spoon. This piece of luck befel Demetriades Finney. He had really worked hard, and

hoped to be placed in a respectable part of the list; and when he saw that he was the “shy man” of the year, he was so disgusted, that he only stopped to take his *Artium Baccalaureus* degree; and, resigning all thoughts of honours in the Church, in which his pater-nity wished him to “push his way,” he resolutely insisted upon being put to the desk in the attorney’s office in which his respectable governor was the principal partner.

“Thirteen hundred and forty-four pounds fifteen shillings and ninepence halfpenny have I spent on your university education,” said old Finney, “and now you will not enter into the Church.”

“I am a spoon—a wooden spoon,” said the dejected Demetriades.

“Gracious goodness!” said mamma, “to think of your giving up the Church and turning lawyer,—consider what *caste* you will lose.”

“I am a spoon, mother, a wooden spoon,” replied the son.

“Demmy, dear Demmy,” cried two sisters, “*do* be a parson; it will help us off.”

“ I am a spoon, girls ; a—a wooden spoon.”

“ Demmy, it’s too bad of you, upon whom the old one has consumed such lots of money, to turn round and floor him at last, and me too,” said the brother, the younger brother ; “ for if you go into the office, of course I’ve no chance. It is not behaving handsome.”

“ I am a spoon, William ; a mere wooden spoon,” said Demetriades.

“ Spoony, you mean,” said the brother, turning away disgusted. “ I wish I had had your chance, that’s all.”

“ You’d have been a ladle—a wooden *ladle*,” shouted Demetriades ; “ you have not brains enough to be a wooden *spoon*.”

In spite of the entreaties of his father, the supplications of his mother, the endearments of his sisters, and the sulky remonstrances of his brother, Demetriades Finney would not return to Cambridge to take his M.A. degree. He entered the office, and worked hard. Nature, or the accident of having been born an attorney’s son, qualified him for the business, into which he entered heart and soul. He was so indefatigable in his attendance, so

sedate in his method of conducting a case, and so beautifully heartless in his views of proceeding against an unfortunate, that even old Finney expressed an opinion that, if Demmy had entered the Church, the world would have gained a bad parson and lost a good lawyer.

William Finney was so annoyed and irritated by his brother's success, that he eloped with the proceeds of a long and very interesting Chancery suit, and, having turned the cheque into coin, he took a passage in an American liner, and settled in Canada. He might perhaps have prospered there; but whiskey was so cheap, that, to drown his vexation at his brother's success in the office, he imbibed every day, and all day, and was found one evening in an apoplectic fit from which he could not be recovered, although the nearest medical man rode twenty-seven miles and a half to bleed him, as soon as he heard of his attack; of which he did hear by a pedlar's cart which passed through his purchase of land some three days after the fit occurred.

The sisters of Demetriades were happily married ; and, as their brother was intrusted with the duty of settling their settlements, they were not sorry that he had not listened to their remonstrances, and gone into the Church. He had done justice to his family, as far as the juvenile female branches of it were concerned. His mother soon forgave him for the disappointment to which he had subjected her—of not being able to talk of “ my son in the Church ;” for, by his exertions in the law, the family finances were so much improved, and her daughters so very comfortably settled, that she was enabled to set up a carriage and pair, and return the visits of the squiresses (who had been in the habit of not asking her to dinner, under the plea of not wishing to put her to the expense of hiring a chaise,) in a turn-out every whit as well appointed as their own.

Old Finney, too, forgave his son. He was tired of business ; and as he had set up in the political line, and taken it into his thick head that he excelled in speech-making, he found the leisure, which his son’s attention to pen-

making and bill-making afforded him, very convenient. He devoted the hours that had been occupied in putting the Acts of Parliament into force, to abusing the framers and passers of those acts, unless they happened to be of the same way of thinking as himself. If the new enactments chanced to be the result of some Radical's motion, Old Finney praised them, and told his hearers, over their pipes and ale at the Free and Easy meetings, that "they were the very *nipulusultrum* of what Acts of Parliament ought to be, and altogether very different from the namby-pamby aristocratic acts passed by the other side of the house;" for which admirable and acute observations his health was invariably proposed and drunk with three times three, to stop the long speech which was reckoned upon as a rider to the act, and to promote the circulation of the beer which was paid for by the liberal member for the borough in which Old Finney dwelt.

Thus did Demetriades Finney reconcile every twig of his family branch by his desertion of the Church in favour of the law.

But was Demetriades satisfied himself? No. He had been rather a gay man at Cambridge, and had courted the best society; though the best society had not returned the compliment, but had bestowed upon him the cognomen of tuft-hunter; and, though it condescended to eat his dinners, swallow his wines, and use his horses—it did all those things as if it conferred a favour on the giver of the feeds and the keeper of a better stud of horses than is usually to be found in an undergraduate's stables.

Demetriades, too, had rather bragged of his prospects in the Church, and used, over his cups, to hint at the chance of his being able one day or other to have it in his power to bestow preferment on his aristocratic friends. He would throw out certain innuendoes against the bench of bishops for pursuing a mode of conduct towards their clergy which he deemed objectionable; and which he should certainly endeavour to alter, by his example, as soon as he took his station amongst them. All this was listened to with grave faces by his guests; but, of course,

when the feed was over, it caused no little fun among the feeders, and the donor of the feed was soon dubbed "Bishop Finney that is to be." Of the acquisition of this nickname, Demetriades was not in the least aware, for it was only bestowed upon him behind his back; and many a laugh did he join in which was raised solely at his own expense, and which made his aristocratic friends by so much the merrier, that he, the laughed at, thought his evening party had gone off more delightfully than common when they laughed louder before him than usual.

As this intimation of his hopes—or rather certainty—of gaining the lawn sleeves and uttering the *nolo*, was always accompanied by a delicate allusion to his prospects of being ranked high in the examination lists when those lists came out, and, in clear type, showed him to his little world in Cambridge as the spoon of his year, he did not let his friends see his disgust at so disagreeable a circumstance; but boldly told them that his interest was so good, and his contempt for

university honours so profound, that he had merely gone in to be examined to fulfil a necessary part of his duties to the university, and would not put himself to the trouble and inconvenience of reading for what was not worth gaining after all. As he accompanied this speech—or rather these speeches, for the same tale was told to every man that he knew—by an excellent champagne supper in his lodgings, his story was a little more believed than not: but when the men were getting sober on the following day, the truth of it was not even a matter of argument. “Bishop Finney that is to be” was pronounced a despiser of truth *nem. con.*: but of this he knew nothing whatever. He therefore left Cambridge after giving one of the most correct B. A. spreads that had ever been given, under the false impression that he had imposed upon his friends, and left them to fancy him capable of getting the *senior optime*, if he had chosen to try for it.

In his correspondence with his friends, after he had left the University, he did not think it necessary to inform them of his having re-

signed the desk of a church in favour of the desk in an attorney's office. He merely said that he thought it a bore to be reading after he had taken his degree, and finished by asking after the news of Cambridge, and relating any little incident that had occurred in his own neighbourhood amongst the great people, whom he knew by name, or sight only, but talked of as if they were his most familiar friends. His letters were rarely answered—for he had only been tolerated for the sake of his breakfasts, dinners, and suppers—and the correspondence first languished, and then died a very natural death.

It happened, once or twice, when business called him to London, that he ran against—I merely mean met with—some one or other of his former brother collegians. He immediately dropped the man of business; and, assuming the air of an independent gentleman, presumed to ask, and generally succeeded in persuading, the man whom he had so fortunately encountered, to dine with him at Long's, and gave such liberal orders for the wines, that the client, whose business had

called him to London, found his bill for that particular journey enlarged into a beak.

To any and every question put to him touching his pursuits in the country, and the cause of his visit to town, Demetriades Finney was prepared to put in his answer. "The country was dull, he allowed ; but the old people liked him to be with them, and they could not last for ever. As to his pursuits, he rode and drove about the country, and wrote a little for his own amusement, but did not publish ; and, as to town, he did run up now and then, but it was more to oblige others than to amuse himself."

As this speech, or others similar to it, was delivered in a cool, pick-tooth sort of manner, and the wine was passed rapidly, the invited guest retired to his party or his bed, convinced that Bishop Finney was comfortably off, but horribly bored by being obliged to live with the old people in some out-of-the-way place or another. Oddly enough, no one knew where the wooden spoon came from ; for, if the question was ever put to him, he cleverly shirked it by a sudden rush

to the window or door, under the pretext of having something very important to see or do.

These dinners at Long's did not produce the effect upon those who partook of them which the donor intended they should. He was invited to a breakfast in the Albany, or at some hotel; but he did not find any one worth knowing who had been asked to meet him, nor was he invited to the family mansion, into which his great object was to gain the *entrée*.

To compensate himself for the disappointments he met with in his attempts to keep up a connection with those men whose society he had cultivated at so great an expense at college, he devoted himself entirely to his profession, and resolved to acquire wealth enough in a short period to enable him to leave his native town, dispose of the goodwill of the business, and set up in London in the capacity of a private gentleman.

For some ten years, Demetriades Finney went on prosperously, and, as every one but himself fancied, contentedly. His practice

was much increased and very profitable; but still he could not command the sort of society into which he wished to be admitted. He dined with lords and esquires, but he did not experience at their tables the same sort of feeling as he did when he sat down with his University friends, who were of a much higher grade than his present entertainers. He was not looked upon as "one of us," although every attention was paid to him which his talents as a lawyer, and his respectability, both personal and professional, demanded.

Finney liked these parties on one account only; he was not likely to meet at any of them his old college set. There was, therefore, no fear of his situation in life, which he foolishly thought degrading, being made known to those for whom he still entertained the greatest respect, and with whom he would gladly have given all his professional profits to be enabled to associate on the same footing as he had done at Cambridge.

All this may seem strange, and not understandable, to those who have not been at one

of our two Universities, or at Trinity College, Dublin; but, in my long experience from this commanding situation, I never knew an instance of a college man, whom circumstances forced to enter into a path of life different to that which he had meant to pursue, and which separated him from those with whom he had been educated, that did not deem the loss of their society the severest drawback on his success, in whatever pursuit he was compelled to engage in. There is a sort of freemasonry in the signs, words, and grips of all who have been educated at public schools and in the Universities, into the secrets of which those who have not been initiated into the mysteries of public-schoolism and college-life can never penetrate. If I, Great Tom, were in the deserts of Arabia, or in the back settlements of America, or in any other equally undesirable locality, I know that if I met with a Christchurch man, he would be delighted to see me—even if he had passed his undergraduate days in Tom's staircase.

“Hilloah! old fellow,” said I, “this is a

digression.” He replied, I am aware of it ; but lie still, and I will proceed. I am apt to be warm on University matters, and cannot help giving vent to my feelings when they are excited.

Well, it so happened that old Finney, before his death, by his assiduous attendances at Free and Easy meetings, and by his liberal distribution of malt liquor and spirituous compounds, had impressed the little voters—I do not mean the little men, bodily speaking, but those who had “a most sweet voice” from having a very little bit of property in the borough—with a notion that the admission of what he called an unliberal member into——would insure their and its ruin. Under this impression he left them when he died ; which he did of apoplexy, solely resulting from persevering in drinking the strong beer of a brewer whose vote he wished to secure.

It also happened that at this period a dissolution of parliament was expected. The gentleman who had represented —— on the radical interest had sent a letter to old Finney, conveying his wish to retire from public

life, and introduce his eldest son, whom he pronounced a fitting person, from similarity of sentiments and liberality of ideas, to succeed himself. Old Finney read the letter to the members of the Free and Easy, went home, and was found a corpse on the following morning.

My “hero,” Demetriades Finney, had hitherto never been engaged in politics in any way. He had not prohibited his father from doing his best to forward the views of his party, because he thought that it amused the old gentleman and did no harm to the firm, though it caused him to be looked shily upon by the opposite party around —. This shiness was not extended to the son; because, as I have said, he had not taken any decided part in the electioneering proceedings of the borough. His mind and body were both too much engaged in the attempt to fulfil his wish of realizing enough to justify him in retiring from business, to allow him to waste a thought or a moment upon anything that did not tend to the immediate furtherance of that object.

When the vacancy had actually occurred, it struck Demetriades that he might add largely to his store by getting up an opposition to the expectant successor of the former candidate on the radical interest. With his usual business-like caution, before he ventured to hint at such a thing as turning the tables on the party by whom the firm had been hitherto engaged, he carefully examined his deceased parent's papers. He locked himself into his private office, and, after secluding himself for some five hours, was heard by the senior clerk to say, as he emerged from his den—"All right—I have them in my power—there is not one of them that does not stand indebted to the firm."

A consultation with his partner, who had been elected from a senior clerkship to an eighth share in the business, followed; and it was soon settled that the most paying part to take in the approaching struggle would be to throw over the old party and carry the new candidate triumphantly.

But who was to be the new candidate? that was the question. It was a difficult

question too; for the agents *in prospectu* did not mean to support a man who had not the means of supporting them with a liberal supply of cash to defeat the radical and fill their own pockets. Several names were proposed and rejected; and the more they thought of all the likely men, within a circle of fifty miles, the less they seemed to be able to hit on one likely to suit their views, as the “perfection of a candidate” for a seat in the House.

They were puzzled and bewildered; but, luckily, their bewilderment was terminated by the senior clerk, who, after giving a mesmeric rap, popped his head inside the private office-door, and, in a whisper, asked if either of the firm was at home to a gentleman, who evidently was such, though he declined to give his name or state his business.

Finney was not certain whether he was at home or not. His partner rather thought he was not at home. To settle whether either of them was at home, the partner peeped through a little glass window into the outer office

where the gentleman who wished to know if they were at home was standing.

“ Yes, I rather think we are at home,” said he, after a careful survey ; and, when the clerk had retired to convey the pleasing intelligence, he added, in answer to the inquiring looks of the senior partner, “ A new candidate, I’ll bet a new hat or a silk umbrella—blue coat, *buff* waistcoat, white ducks, and a white tie—a Tory, I’ll bet a white felt for summer wear.”

The gentleman was introduced. He took off his hat, laid down his riding-stick, and pulled off a pair of yellow Woodstocks, before he took the seat which was placed for him by the junior partner. All the while these operations were going on, Demetriades surveyed the stranger. He was certain that the face and figure had at one time been familiar to him ; but both were considerably enlarged. It was, if it was an old friend, like an octavo reprinted and brought out in quarto.

“ Gentlemen, I am here to—”

“ That voice ! Fitznoodleby—I am sure it

is," said Demetriades. "Johnson, oblige me by retiring: this is an old friend of mine."

The partner of one-eighth of course gave way to him who retained the seven-eighths.

"Fitznoodleby, don't you remember Finney at King's?"

"What, the Bishop? it cannot be," said the stranger. Finney looked astonished at first, but, after a moment's thought, said—"Oh! I see your error. I was meant for the Church, but the governor wished me to supply his place in the office, and so—I—I—did not think it worth while to disappoint him, and let a lucrative business go to the dogs."

"I am delighted to meet an old college friend," said the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby; "especially as I think we are likely to be of mutual service to each other."

"You are a candidate for the borough, then?"

"I am come down on purpose. I am connected with the present administration, and—I may as well speak out—came here to sound the rival candidate's agent before I ventured into the field; but little expected to find in

him a brother collegian, and a man with whom I once lived on such very intimate terms."

Finney recollected that this intimate friend had dined with him twice, and never returned the invitation ; but he smiled as he replied, that he was not the agent of the opposing party—that he was quite at liberty to act for any one—and that, of course, he should feel more pleasure in forwarding the views and wishes of an intimate college friend, than those of one for whom he felt no ties of early friendship.

I need not dwell on what passed during a two hours' talk between the college friends, as this is not the election with which my tale is principally concerned. Suffice it to say, that after a week's sojourn in —, Fitznoodleby was informed in a polite note that his opponent, finding, by some miraculous means for which he could not account, that he had lost a majority of the liberal voters, did not mean to go to the poll.

Soon after Fitznoodleby's election and departure from the borough which he was to represent in parliament, Demetrius Finney was

missing from his desk and offices. The junior partner carried on the business, and to all inquiries for his missing senior, his only reply was, "He'll turn up some day, I'll bet a new hat or a silk umbrella."

"You'll be ill, sir, I know you will, if you read so hard and drink nothing but green tea, and sit up so late o' nights with nothing for a night-cap but a damp towel—and you that took your Bachelor's before you came up," said Tom Cooke, one of our oldest scouts, to a gentleman rather far advanced in life not to be an A.M.

"Never mind, Tom, wet the gunpowder and put in a strong charge; then leave me to read, for I have much to do in a very short time. I am to be ordained on Trinity Sunday."

These words were spoken by our old acquaintance Demetriades, who had been removed by a *liccat* from King's, Cambridge, *ad eundem gradum*, at this house—a difficult thing to effect; but easy in his peculiar case—

backed by the influence of the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby with an obliging Dean.

Finney read very hard, but did not allow his reading to prevent his giving very excellent dinners and wine-parties to the best men in Ch. Ch., to whom the letters given him by his obliged friend the member for —— introduced him.

Three weeks sufficed to keep what is called his master's term ; and, as he had not removed his name from the books of his Cambridge College, until he removed it to our books, he was admitted to his master's degree as soon as his residential term was kept. He did not "go down," however, but remained in his lodgings, nearly opposite my gateway, under the scoutship of Tom Cooke, until Trinity Sunday arrived, when he was ordained by letters demissory on the curacy of Little Darr. In a few weeks afterwards he returned to the borough of ——, made certain arrangements with his former partner, and went down to his curacy. The Vicar of Great Darr. immediately gave up his house to him ; and, after he had obtained priest's orders, the living.

The patron had taken care that the former incumbent should lose nothing by obliging him, and, through him, the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby.

Another fleeting year saw Demetriades Finney a pluralist. For the first time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, Great Darr. and Little Darr. were in the possession of the same individual, and both given away by one Lord Chancellor.

A few more fleeting years saw Finney a Doctor of Divinity, and saw him riding about his two parishes in a shovel hat, and Arch-deaconal-cut coat, elastic knees, and long untopped riding-boots. They also saw him entertaining a large assemblage of aristocratic friends, and among them, when the House was not sitting, the Hon. Mr. Fitznoodleby, who began to think that it "was upon the cards" that the man, at whom he used to laugh at Cambridge for even hinting at the possibility of such an event, might be Bishop Finney, after all.

To effect this object Demetriades left nothing untried. He made himself honorary

secretary to every society that was then in existence, connected, in the remotest way, with the Church; was liberal in his donations to schools and new churches, and took care that his name should appear in the papers, when he did subscribe, not as "D.D.," or "A Friend to the Church," £100—but as "Doctor Demetriades Finney, Rector of Darrington Major and Vicar of Darrington Minor, £100." He also knew no distinction of persons or parties in his invitations to the dinners at Great Darr.—the excellency of which was proverbial; but carefully selected such men for his guests, and such only, as were likely to be of benefit to him hereafter.

He also made a point of spending three months in London, in the season, and cultivating those friends to whom he was introduced by his friend Mr. Fitznoodleby, and by his other friends, whose interest he had insured by his very capital dinners and his obliging manners; for he was always ready to preach charity sermons, propose resolutions on the platforms at public meetings, or do anything else to promote the interests of—

himself, and to keep his name before the public. He published a volume of sermons, and, as he paid all the expenses of printing and advertising, and gave them away, they went off with astonishing rapidity. He even advertised a second edition, and then a third, but took care not to have any more than the first impression "pulled off."

It so chanced, about five years after his appointment to the livings of Great and Little Dar., that Demetriades Finney found himself in a very awkward *fix*, as our friends over the Atlantic call it. A question of vital importance, as it affected the Church, had been brought into Parliament, and the part taken by one of the members for the University was so much disapproved of by the majority of the members of Convocation, that they proposed and carried the very unusual motion that he should be called upon to resign his seat. He did so at once; and, after stating his reasons for the part he had taken, appealed to his constituents, announced himself as a candidate to represent the University, and solicited a renewal of their support. A rival

candidate appeared in the field, and a severe contest was expected.

Before Dr. Finney could make up his episcopally-inclined mind how to act, he received two notes, one from each of his most influential friends, which caused him much uneasiness. The first which he opened he knew by the handwriting was from the Honourable Mr. Fitznoodleby. Its contents were these :—

“ Downing Street, April 2nd.

“ Dear Finney,

“ My friend Sir Ernest Meanwell starts again for Oxford University. I know you will oblige me by giving him your vote and all the interest which so popular a man as yourself can secure. *We*—you will understand me—shall not be unmindful of those friends who assist us at this *most important* crisis.

“ Your faithful friend,

“ ARTHUR FITZNOODLEBY.”

“ I *must* vote for Meanwell,” said Finney, as he laid down the note ; “ gratitude demands it of me.”

The other letter ran thus :—

“ My dear Doctor Finney,

“ I am obliged to you for a copy of your very excellent, I may say superior, sermons. We have read them with great pleasure, and, I hope I may add, advantage. I am happy to see that you have arrived at a third edition—a sure testimony to their merits; by the by, have you heard that Mr. Swillsby Slowe means to oppose Sir Ernest Meanwell at Oxford? Your name is still on the books of Christchurch, I believe; and if you will support Slowe, who is a sound man, you will oblige me. There are strange rumours afloat, and it is believed that *we*—you will see my meaning—are not unlikely to replace the present *administration*. I need scarcely say that we shall not be *slow* in seconding those who support our friend Slowe.—Excuse the bad pun, and believe me,

“ My dear Doctor Finney,

“ Your sincere friend and admirer,

“ PURPLETON.

“ PS. If you can spare me one copy more of your excellent sermons, do oblige me by

sending it to the ——. He is with *us*, I assure you."

"Very polite and considerate of Lord Purpleton, I think—but it is very unpleasant to vote against Fitznoodleby. I really think that Slowe has strong claims—very strong claims. I will go up to Oxford, at all events, and see how my college stands affected, and inquire into the truth of Lord Purpleton's postscript."

As soon as Doctor Demetriades Finney had finished reading those letters and eating his breakfast, he ordered post-horses, and set off for Oxford.

His first care was to call upon the Dean, the Subdean, and Tutors. The approaching election was the only thing talked of, after the usual exchange of compliments, and observations on the state of the barometer and thermometer.

Dr. Finney was cautious, and made a capital listener, as he offered no remarks, but merely asked questions and nodded or shook his head by way of reply. He found opinions so much divided, even in our house of

Ch. Ch.—an unusual circumstance, as my men generally, as a coachman would say, work well together. Upon this momentous occasion, however, they each pulled different ways; some bolted, and others seemed inclined to kick over the traces. The Dean double-thonged them; the Censor tried to curb them up tighter; but they would not answer to the whip, and reared and plunged frightfully.

Dr. Finney was as much in the dark as to the course which it was most for his interest to pursue, after listening to the sentiments of the Dean, as he was before his arrival in Oxford. The Dean and two of the Tutors were evidently in favour of Sir Ernest Meanwell; he had been a good representative; and, although they allowed that he had made a great mistake in yielding to the popular cry on a subject of such vital importance, they quoted the *humanum est errare* in his favour, and resolved to support him, because he belonged to the administration that was *in*. On the other hand, the Junior Tutors were all for Mr. Slowe; for he was wealthy, carried weight

with him in the House—he weighed eighteen stone and a half—talked much and well upon his hobbyhorse subjects, the Church, and education on church principles, and was, moreover, sure of holding office in the administration. He was *out*, but almost sure of shortly coming *in*. As to Lord Purpleton's postscript—each party claimed the —— as its staunch supporter; so that the poor doctor, not knowing how to act, resolved to ask the opinion of Tom Cooke, his scout, who, he was fully aware, was well informed on all University matters.

Tom, as he put out the dress-suit just before dinner, in reply to Finney's inquiry on which side the majority was likely to vote, shook his head, and confessed that he should be sorry to back either party, even though the general opinion was the odds were in favour of the new horse. When Tom had given this, which was the only opinion he had to give, he, in his turn, endeavoured to obtain a little information, and find out how the doctor meant to vote. He might as well have tried to find out which way the wind would

blow that day week, for the doctor merely coughed, nodded, or shook his head.

“ Meanwell is, I believe, sir, a great friend of your friend Fitznoodleby ?” said Tom.

The doctor nodded.

‘ And Slowe is a great friend of your friend Lord Purpleton ?’

Another nod.

“ Ah ! I see how it is—don’t promise either party, eh ? perhaps not vote at all ? If so—take my advice, and leave the ‘ ’varsity ’ as soon as possible, or your morality will be seduced.”

The doctor was half inclined to take this advice, and not risk the seduction of his morality ; but he knew that if he did not vote, he should offend both parties, and — he was invited to dine with the Dean.

The dinner was remarkably good for an Oxford Don’s dinner, and those only were asked to partake of it who were stanch Meanwellites. Dr. Finney, by implication—for he had given no sign—was supposed to be so favourably disposed to their views, that, after his coffee, as he took his leave, the Dean said,

“We may reckon upon your vote, of course?” The doctor was so confounded, that he nodded his head and rushed out of the room. The Dean of course *booked* him.

On the following day, the doctor, after calling upon every man whom he knew in the University, to find out the true state of the opposing parties, dined with one of the Junior Tutors, who was the leader of the Sloweites. So much did he seem to favour the views of the new candidate—by implication; for he was as guarded as ever—that he was booked for a sure vote for Slowe, because he had nodded his head when some one said he thought him safe to carry the election.

The day of the election arrived, and with it some of the strangest-dressed individuals from remote regions that had ever been seen in Oxford. It was great sport for the young men to see the extraordinarily cut coats, oddly shaped hats, and old-fashioned boots that were uncoached at the various inns by the public conveyances that came from the north and the principality. “What a set of guys, gigs, or quizzes!” were the remarks,

accordingly as the remarkers were Etonians, Westminster, or Carthusians.

It was a curious but a painful sight to witness men, bowed down by the weight of years and the infirmities of age, meet in the streets or in the convocation house, and, after gazing at each other intently with their eyes shaded by their hands, exclaim—"Why, it must be—Brown, don't you recollect Thompson?" or, "Thompson, you cannot have forgotten Brown?" and then to see them grasp each other's hands, and hold them as if they would never part again if they could help it; and then, after a lengthened inquiry as to their state in life, their fortunes and their families, each would reluctantly drop his old friend's hand, and, turning to a bystander, observe, "Poor Brown! how very old he looks! cannot last long;" or, "Poor old Thompson! to think what a fine young man I remember him; and to think that, with his talents, he is merely a curate now!"

It was a curious but a painful sight, and many a tear was shed in the convocation house that day which fell unobserved down the

withered cheeks, or was silently wiped away by the hands of those who had met then after a separation of many years, and who were never likely to meet again. Some had prospered and were wealthy; others had drunk deep of the cup of affliction, and were poor in worldly goods, but still rich in the warm affections of the heart. The joy of meeting levelled all distinctions; and the man who had travelled to Oxford in his own snug carriage warmly greeted his poorer brother, who had been indebted to some charitable parishioner for the means of reaching the University, on the outside of a public conveyance.

It was truly a curious and most painful sight. Dr. Finney's entrance caused no little stir; his bulky person and flowing robes over his very archdeaconal-cut clothes, gave rise to the question, "Who is he?" The answer, "The celebrated Dr. Demetriades Finney, of Darrington Major and Minor," would at any other time have given him great pleasure. At that moment, however, he was too much engaged with his painful position to dwell upon the celebrity which his name had obtained.

He had not made up his mind *yet* for whom he should vote: but, as he approached the table in his turn, and got a sight of the mode in which each person voted—by writing his name on a long sheet of paper, which was covered with another sheet, so that he could not see how his immediate predecessor voted—it gave him courage; and as he heard a whisper just before he was admitted within the bar that Mr. Swillsby Slowe was eighteen a-head of Sir Ernest Meanwell, he took up the pen and boldly voted for Lord Purpleton's friend, fully confident that his treachery to his friend Fitznoodleby would never be discovered.

He dined with the Dean that day; and, just as they had sat down to table, word was brought in that the votes had been cast up, and the Vice-Chancellor had announced Mr. Swillsby Slowe the successful candidate by a majority of sixty-one.

The faces of the Meanwellites were immediately elongated. They were afraid that they should be beaten, but never dreamed of being so shamefully beaten.

“It is very odd,” said the Dean, pausing after he had helped the salmon, and pulling out a red pocket-book. “I thought I had calculated too nicely to be so much deceived: here is my list—let me see—you voted,—and you,—and you,—and you, Dr. Finney, you voted for our friend Meanwell, of course?”

All the others said *yes* plainly. The Doctor seized on a port-wine decanter, poured out a large glass, and held it up between the light and his face, that the blush which overspread his cheeks, as he nodded affirmatively, might be mistaken for the purple glow of the wine.

“Some one has deceived me, certainly—I am sure I reckoned very accurately, and I know how all our men polled but one. I shall find him out and expose him. Dr. Finney, a glass of wine,” said the Dean.

The looks of every one in the party were turned upon the Doctor. He felt very red in the face, and very hot and uncomfortable. A smile, a very meaning smile, went round; and, instead of accepting the Dean’s challenge, the Doctor pretended that he had a fish-bone

stuck across his epiglottis, and, putting his handkerchief to his mouth, coughed violently, and left the room.

He even went through the farce of sending for a surgeon to examine his throat; and, whilst the surgeon was endeavouring to find what was not there, a note was brought in by Tom Cooke from the Dean, which briefly stated that "it was now known who it was that had pretended to favour Sir Ernest Meanwell's cause, and had voted for his opponent, and that the sooner the person who had been guilty of such an act explained his conduct or retired into the country, the more agreeable it would be to every one of his brother collegians."

Dr. Finney took the hint and a postchaise and pair. He returned to Great Darr., and waited with no little anxiety the result of his discovered duplicity. Two letters arrived: one from the Honourable Arthur Fitznoodleby, simply telling him that he had acted in such a manner that all further acquaintance must be at an end between them; the other from Lord Purpleton, thanking him for

voting for his friend Mr. Swillsby Slowe, but regretting that in doing so he should have broken a sacred promise given to another party.

Doctor Finney explained ; but no further notice was taken of him. He was cut by all his aristocratic friends ; and, although he went up to London in the season, as usual, he was not called upon to spout on a platform or to preach charity sermons.

This treatment had such an effect upon his temper that when he returned to Great Darr. he offended the singers, quarrelled with the ringers, and had an action brought against him by the parish clerk. His farmers refused to take his tithes ; and, when he proceeded to take them up himself, they sent him notices of actions for trespass if he went upon their lands. He did so ; and, as his former profession led him to delight in actions-at-law, he had so much amusement in that way, that, to use a common phrase, he made the place too hot to hold him.

His diocesan, when appealed to, advised him to absent himself for a year or two. He

adopted the advice, and was rung out of his parish by the men, and hooted and screeched out by the boys and women—merely because he had been to vote at an Oxford election.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NICE YOUNG MAN.

Landlord, fill the flowing bowl till it runs over.

Musæ Postpuerenses.

“ You are certainly an excellent listener, Mr. Cuique,” said Great Tom, wagging his clapper approvingly.

“ I am when I am obliged,” I commenced.

“ Obligated ? of course, you are *obliged* to me for telling you such a series of entertaining anecdotes. Should you like another ? a *Pursey* anecdote, for instance ? ”

“ Very much indeed, Mr. Thomas,” I replied ; for what other answer could I make to my belligerent incubus ?

“ Now don’t insult me,” said Tom. “ Just fancy how Newton, Pope, Homer, or Alcibiades, would have felt to hear themselves

called Mister Alcibiades, Mister Homer, and so on. Don't mister me—you cannot master me, as you know—but call me plain, unadulterated Tom, or Great Tom, if you please. If you are only anxious to be scrupulously correct, you ought to designate me, considering my Italian origin, as Signor Thomaso—but don't do any thing of the kind. I do not like to have my feelings wrung by being reminded of the days of my sweet childhood—

In infancy my hopes and fears,

and all that sort of thing. Don't. Promise me, on the honour of a gent.—I mean a servitor-gentleman—that you won't."

I laid my dexter hand upon the sinister side of my waistcoat, and gave the required promise.

"Talking of designations or titles, or, in plain English, names—yours is a puzzle. Cuique! well, it is a queer name—who gave you that name?"

I was about to answer from the Catechism a question so catechismally put, and say,

“my godfathers and my godmothers,” when I luckily recollected that it was my surname, and not my Christian appellation.

“It is an old family name,” said I, “and was most probably of Roman origin. My father ——”

“That will do,” said Tom; “drop the pedigree. Do you know that, on the first night of your arrival in my tower, the porter, who had just read your name on your trunk, when he came up to take a toll out of me, was spelling it, and trying to make something of it. First, ‘it must be *Queek* ;’ next ‘he thought *Kike* or *Kick*,’ and finally ‘*Qu-ick*.’ I spelt it for him thus, *Ky-quee*, and now he has got it correctly, which must rather have astonished you.”

“It did a little,” said I; “but I am used to be called by names that never belonged to me. After all, to use an old used-up quotation, ‘What’s in a name?’”

“A great deal sometimes; one of our men, for instance—*par exemple*, as the French say, or *exempli gratiá*, as the Latins have it — came unexpectedly into a hundred

thousand pounds merely because his name was Clarke—Clark with an e at the end of it.”

“I have got an e to the end of my name,” said I, sighing; “but no one of the family has ever made a note of it.”

“A pound note, eh? — Never mind the pun—it’s a shocking bad one—but just drop all thoughts of being a fortunate youth yourself for the present, and listen to my little tale of one that was—to a certain extent.”

“If you please, sir, here is a gentleman,” said a quiet, soft-speaking servant to one of our Deans, as he sat writing in his study, “who wishes to speak to you.”

“I am not at home, James, to anybody. It is past four o’clock.”

“But he says, sir ——”

“I’m gone into the library.”

“That he will not detain you ——”

“I’m in the chapter-house or the cathedral.”

“More than five ——”

"I'm out for an airing."

"Minutes; his time is very valuable."

"And so is mine, James; it is past college calling-hours, and so I'm gone for a walk into the meadow," said the Dean, in a decided tone.

"If you please, sir," said James, bowing respectfully, for the college-butler was *in extremis*, and he hoped to succeed to his post through the interest of his master—"if you please, sir, the gentleman is a gentleman" (he had given James a half-crown to induce him to urge the Dean to see him), "and has come up a long way to enter a young man as a gentleman-commoner."

"He cannot be a gentleman, in the rigid sense of that ill-used word, or he would have sent in his card, even if he had called at so unbusiness-like an hour."

"If you please, sir, he has sent in his card. Here it is," said James, showing four inches by two of very plain pasteboard.

"Then why did you not give it me before?" said the Dean, very harshly, as he snatched it out of his servant's hand.

James did not reply, but made a most profoundly-respectful bow.

“Why, what is this?” said the Dean, starting as he looked at the card, and read aloud—

MESSRS. PYPE, HOOKER, AND CO.

Dealers in Foreign Cigars and Tobaccos,

MINORIES.

N.B.—Left-off wearing apparel, books, pictures, and plate, taken in exchange on liberal terms.

“I really beg pardon, sir,” said James, turning as pale as if he had been smoking a minerigo, made up from cabbage-leaves and rhubarb stems by Messrs. Pype, Hooker, and Co. “Beg pardon, sir, but that belongs to the other gentleman, as called just at the same time.”

“A dealer in filthy tobacco call on the Dean of Christ’s Church!—order the porter to turn him out, on pain of being turned out himself if he does not.”

“If you please, sir, he called upon *me*,” said James; but, finding from his master’s black looks that he had made a mistake, he

adroitly added, "to leave a parcel which a friend of mine sent down by him to save carriage."

"Oh! very well, James," said the Dean, brightening up; "here, take back this card, and give me the other."

James did so; and, when his master had read the name, and bidden him usher in Mr. Gabberton Swift, he did so, and then retired to his pantry, to conclude a deal with the gentleman who represented Messrs. Pype and Hooker. The result of the bargain was, that James locked up a two-pound box of unmistakeable British Cabanas, and the cigar-merchant carried off two suits of clerically-cut black clothes, a pair of bishop's boots, and a shovel hat. How exasperated would the dignitary have been, to whom those articles had lately belonged, had he known that all the dignity which he had derived from his dress had ended in smoke!

He knew nothing of it, however; so he received Mr. Gabberton Swift most graciously, although he was a very small man,

and not particularly well calculated, from the style of his dress and personal appearance, to command respect.

Mr. Gabberton Swift was, as I have said, a very small man, but a very great talker. His tongue was so well trained, that if he could have entered it for the Derby, he would have won the cup and distanced the whole field—it ran so very fast when it was once started.

“I am happy to see you, sir,” commenced the Dean, waving his visitor to a seat, “although you must be aware that ——”

“I catch it! that’s enough! unreasonable hour — otherwise engaged. We could not help it—time very precious with men in business,” replied the little man, laying down his hat and stick, pulling off his gloves, and diving into an inner pocket after something or another. At last he caught a pocket-book, after fishing for it for some time among a heap of papers, and, opening it, took out a note and handed it to the Dean.

“I presume this is from ——?”

“I catch it! that’s enough!—it *is* from

the lad's tutor, formerly a member of this
——”

The Dean was about to read it.

“That's enough! look at the signature. You'll catch it, and I'll explain to save time. Mr. Robert Smudgerton, aged twenty-two, crammed to suffocation in the classics. He wishes to be entered immediately, and reside as soon as possible.”

“Are you aware, sir, that our house is so——”

“That's quite enough—I catch it. I know you are full, but I think you can find room.”

“Room, perhaps, but not rooms.”

“Not so bad that,” said Mr. Swift, winking and giving a sort of Italian opera clap with his hands. “Not so decidedly bad. Money, money, Mr. Dean, will find the rooms and furnish them too: so have the goodness to get the book and pop him down. Let me know the amount of the fees, and I will give you a cheque for the money.”

The Dean stared, and looked perfectly dismayed. Mr. Gabberton Swift did not see the look, but went on, saying, “Gent. Com.

of course. We shall cash up liberally to the tutors, though we don't care about the classics. Merely wish him to reside a couple of years or so, just to give him a dash of respectability. Selected your college because it is the most genteel—lots of *nobs* here, a'n't there?"

"Nobs? Oh! the abbreviation of *nobiles*, he means," said the Dean, not exactly knowing how to treat his extraordinary visitor.

"What's the stumpy for a Gent. Com.?" inquired Mr. Gabberton Swift, pulling out a cheque-book from a side-pocket, and seizing the Dean's own swan's quill pen.

"May I venture to inquire, before we proceed any farther in this business, whom—"

"That's enough! I catch it. My name you know. I'm a lawyer—some would not own it, but say solicitor—it is more genteel, *they* think—I don't. I'm a lawyer, and live at Brummagem."

"Where?" looked the Dean.

Mr. Swift was looking at him at that moment, and holding his pen, ready to fill up the cheque.

“That’s enough!—I catch it—know your thoughts—Brummagem is short for Birmingham. Devil of a place for guns, and all those sorts of things. We can manufacture as good cannons there as you can at Ch. Ch.,” said Mr. Swift.

The Dean fell into a seat, deeply offended at being expected to laugh at a stale pun made up afresh by a Birmingham attorney. “Allow me to read this note,” said he, in a despairing kind of whisper.

“Read fast then, for I want to be off by the ’Tivy,” said Swift, alluding to his wish to be off by the Tantivy coach.

While the Dean was reading a short note from a former member of his college, who added to a curate’s stipend a few pounds by taking half a dozen private pupils, Mr. Swift employed himself in preparing a cheque, leaving a blank for the amount. Just as the Dean had finished reading the note, and was planning some defensible excuse for not admitting “a young lad who had been brought up in an attorney’s office, and had been placed under Mr. Johnstone’s care for six

months to prepare him for college, in order that he might acquire the habits and manners of a gentleman," he let the note fall from his hands on hearing Mr. Swift whisper audibly—

"D——d bad pen! but what can be expected from a parson? Wish he'd stir his stumps."

"Mr. Swift, I am really—but I will pass that over—I cannot admit the young gentleman into our house," said the Dean.

"Why not? any thing amiss in his character? Johnstone has not presumed to say any thing wrong of him?"

"I beg to decline answering any questions," replied the Dean, in a decided and dignified tone.

"I catch it—that's enough. See you're up to trap. You'd make a capital witness if you were properly instructed; but, as to Mr. Robert Smudgerton, if you are not satisfied of his respectability from the tutor's note, I must play my trump-card. There, read *that*."

The Dean would have given a considerable sum of money to have had the impudent

little lawyer kicked out of college, but it was not to be done; so he took the note, and to his great surprise found a coronetted seal upon it, and when he had opened it saw a letter from a *nob*, as Mr. Swift would have called him, urging him earnestly and respectfully to admit a young man, who had been brought up to the law, but who had unexpectedly come into a large fortune, as a member of Ch. Ch.

“That’s enough—I catch it—Lord Shorte’s letter has done it,” said Swift. “Now just name the sum, and I’ll fill up the cheque.”

The Dean was puzzled. Lord Shorte, though a poor peer with a large family, was a respectable man, and he did not wish to offend him. After a few minutes’ anxious thinking (during which Gabberton Swift was walking round the Dean’s private library, with his hands beneath his coat-tails, examining the engravings and paintings of what he called “the clerical swells”), he told his visitor that he would communicate with him through Lord Shorte, and do the best he could to forward their mutual wishes.

“ That’s enough — I catch it — Bobby Smudge is all right ! Now, what’s to pay ? ”

The Dean rang the bell forcibly, and, as he did so, assured the little lawyer that those matters would be settled when the young man came up to be matriculated. He felt very much relieved when James appeared to usher his visitor out. He made him a low bow, but stiffened his back suddenly again, when he heard Mr. Gabberton Swift say to his servant that he, the Dean, “ was the slowest coach he had ever met with, and awfully bumptious, but that he had queered him.”

James grinned, but did not dare to laugh outright, for fear he should lose the butlership.

The candidate for admission into Ch. Ch. College was Mr. Robert Smudgerton, or Bobby Smudge, as he was more usually called by his intimates. He was the only child of a curious old man, of whom nobody but Mr. Gabberton Swift knew any thing : and he knew but little until, by a mere chance, he became his man of business.

He dwelt upon a sort of common, upon a

small farm which had been left him by his forefathers, and which was deemed to be of so little value that, had it been thrown upon the market, no one would have given a bidding for it except to insure himself a vote for the county. The little freehold might have contained some seventy or eighty acres of very bad land indeed, and the house and homestead were very small, and in a very dilapidated condition. About twenty acres were ploughed, and produced but scanty crops of corn; and the common, as it was called, though it was not a common, but his own private property, enabled the owner to keep a flock of sheep. By dealing in these, and chopping and changing ewes for tegs, and tegs for ewes, he contrived to get enough to make both ends of the year meet, and to lay by a few pounds, or rather guineas, for he had an idea that a bank-note might possibly become what Cobbett called it—"a mere rag;" while gold, he knew, would always find a market at its own intrinsic value.

Old Smudgerton's wife was a thrifty woman, and made a pretty penny by her poultry.

She was clever in rearing turkeys, geese, and ducks. In fattening chickens and turkey-poults, she was unrivalled. A green goose of her rearing was looked upon as a delicacy ; and the higgler who could bid high enough to secure every one of those which she meant to part with, deemed himself a lucky man.

As they had but one child, and lived upon almost nothing, had no rent to pay, and very few taxes, they soon scraped enough money together, to purchase, at a mere trifle, the remainder of what was called the common. Lord Shorte, their nearest neighbour, thought himself a fortunate peer to meet with a purchaser of what to him was really valueless, and his bailiff thought old Smudgerton a greater fool than he took him to be for laying out his gold on so worthless a soil. "The old fool!" said he to himself, as he pocketed the guineas, "to go and give a hundred and fifty good gold coins for a few acres of barren hill, without grass enough upon it to save a sheep from starving."

It chanced one day that the flock which

had been pastured upon this bit of ground were driven home by their owner just as a clever medical man, who dwelt in the neighbourhood, was riding by. "Hoigh! Mr. Doctor," called out old Smudgerton, "folk do tell I you knows a mint of things; can'st tell I what 'tis as sticks to sheep's legs here-about, and makes 'em all yellow-like?"

The Doctor dismounted from his horse, and carefully examined the animals' legs, and then begged to be shown the spot where they had been feeding. It was pointed out to him; and when he had examined very carefully the soil of a narrow ditch, down which a small stream trickled, he asked to whom the land belonged.

"To I, to be sure," said the farmer. "I paid for un in golden guineas."

"Have you got the deeds right and safe?"

"Trust I for that. Master Gabberton Swift, of Brummagem, took care of that, and did not forget to charge for 't."

"Then I can only tell you, if I'm not deceived, that you have a fortune in this bit of land. There is a vein of yellow ochre here

which is very valuable. I will take a portion of the soil home and analyze it."

"Do," said the farmer; "and if it turns into gold, thee shalt have thy share of it."

The analysis proved the doctor's conjecture. The soil about ten feet below the surface of the "barren hill" proved to be a fine vein of yellow ochre about nine or ten inches in thickness. By a judicious management of the pit, under the doctor's suggestions, to whom the owner honourably gave a fair percentage, the profits of it were enormous. The old man did not change his mode of living in his prosperity, but kept on, quietly adding field to field and house to house, until he became a large landed proprietor.

Mr. Gabberton Smith thought himself a lucky man in having been employed by old Smudgerton to make out the title-deeds of the "barren hill," as he did it so effectually that all attempts upon the part of Lord Shorte to find a defect in them were vain. This ensured him all the business of the lucky purchaser, and enabled him to put many a pound into his pocket, by conveying lands in

the neighbourhood to his fortunate employer. He foresaw that, with Smudgerton's habits and mode of living, the son would one day or another be a very wealthy man. He advised the father, and the advice was given disinterestedly, to send him to a public school, and make a scholar and a gentleman of him.

“ 'Tain't in un, man, 'tain't in un, I tell ye ; but, if you'll take un and make a lawyer on un, I'll ha' un taught to read and write,” said the father.

Two years after that promise, our hero, Mr. Robert Smudgerton, might have been seen perched on a high stool in Mr. Gabberton Swift's office, having been taught to write a very fair but cramped hand at a little school in the neighbourhood. As to spelling, that was the rock he split upon. He could copy anything very neatly, but when he had to write a bit of original manuscript, he made a sad mess of it. The ph, in such words as philosopher, was a puzzler ; but his great difficulty was in giving the preference to the ie or ei. So, when he came to a word like

believe, he was cunning enough to write two ees, and put a dot just over the middle of them, leaving the reader to imagine that his error was the result of a mere *lapsus plumæ*.

Well, people cannot live for ever. Old Smudgerton died, and his wife too, leaving their son sole heir to a very large sum of ready money, and several very valuable estates, amongst which was the bit of "barren hill," which Lord Shorte's bailiff thought him such an old fool for having purchased of his master in exchange for pure golden guineas.

Lord Shorte, when he heard of the amount to which Master Robert Smudgerton had succeeded, upon the death of his hard-working parents, suddenly felt a great interest in him, and resolved to see him, and, if he found any thing to work upon in him, to make a gentleman of him. He thought that it might not be a very bad speculation to restore the bit of "barren hill" to the family again, by uniting the owner of it to one of his numerous daughters.

His inquiries at Mr. Gabberton Swift's into the sayings and doings of Master Bobby

Smudge may serve to give you an insight into the habits and pursuits of that fortunate young man.

“ I have called, Mr. Swift,” said his lordship, “ to ask a few questions concerning Mr. Robert Smud—”

“ That’s enough ! I catch it—called to pump me about our Bobby,” replied Mr. Swift.

Lord Shorte’s face lengthened at “ our Bobby ;” but he merely bowed and inquired if he was steady, attentive to his business, and gentlemanly in his habits and manners.

“ That’s enough—I catch it. Your lordship means, will he ever be presentable—admissible into good society, and fit to go to church with a real lady.”

His lordship winced, but smiled and nodded affirmatively.

“ As to steadiness,” said Mr. Swift, “ he copies out what I set him to do, and then goes to his dogs, ferrets, and other animals, of which he is very fond.”

“ As a natural historian or a sporting man ?”

“ I object to that question,” said Swift,

“because I cannot answer it satisfactorily. All I can say is he keeps several dogs with very flat noses, short-cropped ears, and tobacco-pipe tails, with which he worries badgers, rats, and cats. He keeps them at a neighbouring public, for my wife cannot bear the noise of the dogs or the smell of the ferrets. That’s enough—I think your lordship catches it.”

His lordship nodded.

“As to your lordship’s next question, touching his habits and manners, I see but very little of him after office-hours, but I am *told* that he sings a capital song, tells a remarkably good story, spends his money like a gentleman, as the sporting men assert, and is particularly good-tempered when he has had his allowance.”

“Oh, you allow him a few guineas a week then, for pocket-money?”

“Pooh! pooh! that is *not* enough—your lordship does *not* catch it. I mean his allowance — of grog,” said Gabberton, looking rather astonished that a peer should be so ignorant.

“ Can I see the young man ? ” (His lordship was about to say gentleman, but a vision of bull-dogs, ferrets, and glasses of grog came across him.) “ I should like to have a little conversation with him.”

The little lawyer sprung up and opened a little window, and bade some one tell Mr. Smudgerton that Lord Shorte wished to speak with him.

After an interval of some five minutes, during which Lord Shorte appeared to be absorbed in contemplating the conveniences of Gabberton Swift's offices, and the lawyer to be writing for his life on a sheet of brief-paper lying before him, the young gentleman entered the private room of his legal tutor. He was dressed in a very large pair of Cossack trousers tied in over his ankles, a red-striped waistcoat, and a sea-green cut-away coat—each of these, his upper vestments, being furnished with a double set of pockets. His hair was closely cropped in front, but left long behind, and brushed furiously up over his ears. About his neck he wore a cambric

kerchief, of which the ground was blue and the pattern red.

Lord Shorte shuddered. Gabberton Swift observed the paroxysm, and said, "That's enough ! I catch it—he won't do."

His lordship instantly disguised his disgust, and blandly asked Mr. Smudgerton how he did, to which that young gentleman, in a voice very like that of a cuckoo with a cold, or a cabman on night-duty at Christmas, replied, "Tol-lollish, considering."

"Ahem !" coughed his lordship, hardly knowing how to commence a conversation with such a curious specimen of wealthy mortality. "Ahem ! I hope you like your profession ?"

"Tol-lollish—considering ; but profession ain't practice, as Will, the rat-catcher says, and I ain't going to practice my profession."

"That's enough ! his lordship catches it," said Swift.

"Does he, by goles ? then he's quicker than my dog, the Duffer, and he can catch a rat quicker than here and there one !" said Smud-

gerton, taking up his master's penknife and quietly paring his nails with it.

"May I venture to ask your age, Mr. Smudgerton?" inquired Lord Shorte.

"Nothing venture, nothing have, as Will says. I was one and twenty last grass," replied "our Bobby."

"Bless me! of age? — come into his property?" said Lord Shorte, looking interrogatively at Mr. Swift.

"I wish I was—wouldn't I buy Will's Tip-pitywichee, the black and tan terrier—that's all! I've got some tol-lollish ones, but she is an astonishing one for vermin," replied Bobby with a knowing nod.

"That is *not* enough—your lordship does *not* catch it. Mr. Smudgerton does not come of age until he has completed his twenty-fifth year," said Mr. Gabberton Swift.

"No thanks to you neither, old gentleman, for tipping the other old gentleman the suggestion," said Mr. Bobby.

"I did it all for the best, young man, and—"

"So did my little bitch, Viper, when she

grabbed one of Will's bantam-chicks instead of an old water-rat," said Bobby, finishing the circle of his very dirty thumb-nail.

Poor Lord Shorte was positively dismayed. Lawyer Swift enjoyed the scene greatly, and would have prolonged the fun had not "our Bobby" taken out his watch and said that "time was up and he was wanted elsewhere. He was particularly engaged to a tol-lollish party at the Bull to see a snake fed upon frogs, and had backed him to eat one, that measured four inches by two, at a gulp."

"That's enough! we catch it—you may go."

Lord Shorte rose, and made Mr. Smudgerton a very polite bow, which that young gentleman returned, by raising his elbow, and then dropping his wrist, as if he was double thonging the near wheeler. As he left the private office, he whispered, but loudly enough for his lordship to hear the observation—

"Call that a peer?—I could manufacture a better out of a Brummagem button-maker."

"Hush! that's enough—his lordship will catch it," replied Mr. Swift, as he thrust the cub out of the door.

“Can any thing be done with him? It is really a pity that so fine a property—”

“And adjoining your lordship’s park—”

“Should be thrown away upon such—”

“That’s enough! how *can* we make a gentleman of him?”

At the terminus of a railroad debate upon the possibility of converting a low-minded, vulgar wretch into a presentable person, it was resolved *nem. con.*—for there was no one to put in a dictum *contrà*—that “our Bobby” should be released from his articles in Mr. Swift’s office, and be properly prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles in the study of Mr. Johnstone, the curate of the parish in which the yellow ochre vein lay, and which had proved a mine of wealth to its fortunate owner.

Lord Shorte sighed as he took his seat in the currie, and thought that fortune had been very spiteful towards him, in not having suggested to *his* sheep to show their yellow legs to an experimental chemist in the shape of a parish apothecary.

I will pass over the period that “our

Bobby" spent at his tutor's, merely observing that he read but very little, and spent the greater part of his time at a neighbouring ale-house, where, without Mr. Johnstone's knowledge, he kept his dogs, ferrets, and other live-stock. He was remarkably surly all the morning, and scarcely spoke to any one; but when he returned from his "quiet walk"—for so he accounted for his visit to the ale-house—he made himself as agreeable as such a brute could do, although Mrs. Johnstone sometimes fancied that he must have spent his time in the greenhouse—his clothes smelt so very strong of tobacco, which, she was aware, her gardener burnt in large quantities to kill the insects.

Let us proceed to describe his college career.

"I have examined that young person, in a very extraordinary dress and with a most inharmonious voice, whom you sent to me, Mr. Dean, with a kind of keeper—a dapper little fellow, who would hardly let me speak a word—and really I cannot conscientiously pronounce him qualified to enter."

"I was afraid so, Mr. Subaudite," said the Dean. "But does he not know sufficient to qualify him for a short residence and an honorary degree? Lord Shorte has taken him by the hand—"

"I am surprised at that," said the college tutor, quietly, "he appears so unfamiliar with soap and water."

"Really, Mr. Subaudite, you are growing too severe," said the Dean, exchanging an incipient smile into a decided frown. "Lord Shorte is very anxious to render this young man, his nearest neighbour, and the possessor of considerable property, a presentable person, and really his legal adviser—"

"What, that's enough! I catch it!"

"His legal adviser, Mr. Something Quick—Speedy—or Fast—I forget his name—"

"Swift," suggested the tutor.

"I thank you, sir; Mr. Swift, as I was about to observe when you interrupted me, has manifested a creditable share of worldly acumen by selecting our house for such a purpose, in preference to any college. Cannot

you, by a little stretch of conscience, pronounce him admissible?"

"You shall judge for yourself, Mr. Dean. I put him on in an easy ode of Horace, and, as he could not translate literally,

——ligna super foco
Largè reponens:

I begged him to render it freely, which he did thus—

Molly, put the kettle on.

The Dean could not resist this; it was too ridiculous; and after a hearty laugh, in which the tutor joined, it was decided that Mr. Robert Smudgerton should be admitted, matriculated, and allowed to come into residence at once if he would promise to engage a private tutor and read hard.

"That's enough! he'll catch it! he's no fool, though he looks a little awkward at first," said Mr. Gabberton Swift, when Mr. Subaudite mentioned the terms on which alone Mr. Smudgerton would be allowed to keep his terms in college.

Bobby nudged his former master, and whis-

pered, "he would not stand having a chap over him all day long, and bothering him about books."

"Pish! *say* you will, and don't do it afterwards — that's enough," replied Swift, in a friendly whisper.

Bobby winked, and then, turning to his new tutor, said "he should be most particular happy."

This difficult point having been settled, the ceremonies were soon performed, and Mr. Smudgerton was a member of our house. Mr. Gabberton Swift, as soon as he had seen him settled in his rooms, placed in his hands a bank-note, value one hundred pounds, and left him, with this little bit of advice, "lark away, as much as you like, but don't be caught out by the dons, or done by the duns."

Mr. Robert Smudgerton took the note to a banker's, and got it changed for gold. He amused himself for some hours in counting over his sovereigns, and then had a game with them at pitch and toss by himself. He got tired of this, however; and when his

scout came to inquire if he wanted any thing, he told him he wanted to buy a dog or two, and asked him if he could recommend him to any person who dealt in them.

“Tom Sharp’s your man, sir. He lives in George Lane, and keeps all sorts of animals, from a mouse up to a mastiff, and a very respectable public-house,” said the scout.

Bobby was delighted, and gave the servant a shilling to drink his health, which he declined, assuring him that an unlimited order on the buttery for all the college servants was expected of every Freshman. This was soon written out; and, although it was worded, “give the barer and his pals as much bere as they can drink,” it was obeyed.

“But whereabouts is George Lane?” inquired Bobby. “And how am I to know Tom Sharp’s house?”

“Go out of Tom Gate, sir, turn to your right, and keep straight on along the Corn Market until you come to a church on your right. The first turning on your left after you have passed the church is George Lane.

As to finding the house, you have only to follow your nose, and you can't mistake it, for Tom Sharp keeps such a lot of stinking animals that you can wind them half a mile off."

Bobby's scout sunk several degrees in his new master's estimation; for he thought the *odora canum vis*—if the passage may be construed—"the agreeable smell of a dog-kennel" superior to any of the *esprits* sold and professed to be manufactured by Delcroix, or any other eminent scent-maker.

The directions given to him by his servant were so plain, that Mr. Smudgerton could not mistake them, and the powerful odour proceeding from a mixture of vermin and dogs, with the meats on which they were fed, led him to the door of Mr. Sharp's abode.

"Look out, Tom," said a sort of cad, half inn-porter and other half under-gamekeeper. "Here's a new customer. A raw country-man, if one may judge by his dress."

"I had rather he had been a Lunnner," said Tom; "for they thinks themselves so

precious clever, and that's what they ain't, at least, in my line. Show the gent. in, William."

Bobby Smudge entered, and was shown into the yard—a narrow, confined spot about sixteen by fourteen feet, occupied in every corner by dogs, badgers, ferrets, pole-cats, rats, mice, poultry, and pigeons. A horrible din arose when they saw a stranger. For some minutes all passed in dumb show, for not a word could be heard until Tom Sharp and Will, his son, had knocked down some half a dozen of the largest dogs with the enormously big sticks which they carried with them for the purpose of keeping order in their canine parliament. I say parliament, because the crowing of cocks and the natural cries of the various animals put you strongly in mind of "another place" where the imitation of those cries is deemed a very clever performance.

As soon as the tumult caused by

Dog and whelp of high renown,
And cur of low degree,

had dwindled to a calm, Mr. Sharp began to show his stock individually, and to expatiate

on their respective merits. Mr. Smudgerton examined their points and their teeth, and did other little experiments peculiar to gentlemen in the fancy line so scientifically, that Mr. Sharp looked around at his son Will, and gave him a sign, which meant—"he is not to be imposed upon;" to which Will replied by a counter-sign, implying, "try it on, but mildly."

During the examination, our hero, Mr. Bobby, had not spoken a syllable, or seemed to listen to the owner of the promiscuous lot before him. He had merely taken out a sort of betting-book, and entered certain observations whenever an animal seemed likely to suit him. When they had completed the circuit of the menagerie, he asked, "What Mr. Sharp kept?"

"Dogs, foxes, badgers, and—but I can get you any thing you please, sir," said Mr. Sharp.

"Stuff, man!—I mean, what do you keep in the house?"

Tom Sharp thought it a very odd question, and doubted if his questioner was sane. "Does

he think we keep monkeys, and them sort of Orientals?" said he, aside, to his son.

"What a fool you are, father! the gentleman only wants to know what lickers you keep. Don't you, sir?" said the dutiful son.

Mr. Bobby nodded.

"Please to walk in, sir?" said Mr. Sharp, suddenly changing his tone and manners from a swaggering dog-dealer to a perfectly polite landlord.

"Of course I do please," said Bobby Smudge, in his croaking way, like a raven with a quinsy.

He was shown into a snug parlour, which was decorated with portraits of fancy-dogs and fancy-men, celebrated pedestrians, notorious cricket-players, and fighting cocks in a variety of attitudes. The scene that followed I will not describe—suffice it to say, that a great deal of liquid was consumed; and, although Mr. Sharp was considered the strongest-headed and most lasting drinker in Oxfordshire, and his son was supposed to inherit the paternal virtues, Mr. Robert Smudgerton left them both under the table. He walked,

or rather staggered, into College, at eleven o'clock at night, having won his reckoning, £1 15s., and a £5 note at cribbage, and animals of which he had the list in his pocket, and which were to be delivered at nine next morning, to the nominal value of £12 10s. at *put*.

Tom Sharp had been completely taken in. He thought he was a match, and more than a match, for any man, much more for a Freshman. And, as to a gentleman-commoner Freshman, he had never met with one before out of whom he had not made a considerable sum of money—but he had never met with one before who had condescended to sit down and smoke with him—not to speak of taking a hand at cribbage and *put*.

“Father, we were done last night, and I have a horrible 'eadach this morning,” said Will, addressing his father, who appeared very ill too.

“Was it all fair and aboveboard?” inquired the father. “No—you know what.”

“All right, I believe—I really do.”

“Where could he have been taught?”

“Teached, you mean,” said the son, who had been to a “British school.”

“Well—taught, then—if that young man does not take *a fust*, and turn out an honour to his college, I don’t know who will. We *are* regular sold, but we must act like men of honour, Will. Here is the list of what we’ve got to send to Christ Church, and as you say they was fairly won, why we’ll pay our debts like gentlemen.”

“We must look out for a flat, father, to cover the loss,” said Will.

“No occasion for that, Will; they will come to our net without our dragging for them. Recollect that animals are risin forty per cent., and rats are not to be had at no price; but now to act like men of honour.”

Mr. Tom Sharp and his son Will, acting on the principle above alluded to, selected a lot of living things, and stowed them away in a most miraculous manner; so much so, that when they entered Canterbury Quad from Oriel Lane, they appeared to be doing nothing but taking a brace of setters into college for a gentleman’s approval.

The porter of Canterbury Gate fancied he saw several things moving in the pockets of each of the dog-fanciers, and smelt something so powerful as to induce him to borrow the under-porter's snuff-box, and take a very large pinch of common Scotch out of it.

They were shown to Mr. Smudgerton's rooms, the father and the son. *Filius tali patre dignus!* and left them in a sad state of renewed intoxication about mid-day.

"I think of calling on Mr. Smudgerton this morning, Mr. Dean, and introducing him to his private tutor," said Mr. Subaudite.

"You will oblige me by so doing," replied the Dean, "for I have a letter from Lord Shorte, saying he shall be passing through here to-day, and shall impose upon my hospitality for a dinner. I shall ask Smudgerton to meet him, for I rather like Lord Shorte, and his interest is considerable."

"Ahem! yes — but he has a very large family," suggested Mr. Subaudite.

"True, but all in the army or navy; some

in the ——; but never mind—do go and call on Mr. Smudgerton.”

“That’s enough—I catch it,” said Mr. Subaudite, imitating Mr. Gabberton Swift so accurately, as to cause the Dean to descend from his dignity, and laugh so loudly, that James came in to inquire if his master had called.

“No, sirrah,” said the Dean, “I did not call, and you know I did not. Show Mr. Subaudite out, and never presume again to—”

“I don’t mean to it. I gives warning in the presence of a witness. I quits this day month,” said James, for the butlership had been given away to another.

The Dean bowed to the senior tutor, and bade James come in to receive his wages, and quit immediately. A few words of explanation, however, and a promise of the first vacant good office, induced James to apologize for his rudeness and resume his duties.

We must follow Mr. Subaudite to the rooms of Mr. Smudgerton.

He was accompanied by a worthy and ex-

cellent young man, who had entered the college as a servitor (you hear, Mr. Cuique?), and by perseverance had gained the highest honours of the University. He had but just taken his bachelor's degree; and his kind friend, Mr. Subaudite, thought that, by making him the private tutor of Mr. Smudgerton, he should enable him to reside comfortably in college, and try for the prizes open to those who have taken their first degree, instead of sending him into some private family as a crammer of the juvenile branches.

They reached Mr. Robert Smudgerton's door and knocked. No answer was returned. The college tutor knocked again and again, and, finding that his application was not successful, took out his card and opened the door, meaning to leave it on the table.

He entered the room, and found, to his great surprise, the owner of the room fast asleep on the sofa.

"Poor young man," said he, turning round to the youthful candidate for the tutorship of the brute, "poor young man, he has been over-reading himself."

“ I should fear not, sir: these tankards and these bottles—I—”

“ Dear me! I did not observe them. He cannot have been—can he?”

“ Drinking? I should hope not.”

“ No, he has been writing—see, here is the manuscript,” said Mr. Subaudite, taking out his spectacles, in order that he might decipher it more clearly.

“ Dear me, what does it mean?”

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|----|---|
| To two setters . . . | £10 | 10 | 0 |
| one pole cat in pup . . . | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| one onc-eyed ferret . . . | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| one magpie as talks . . . | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| two snakes as is tame . . . | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| one dozen rats, warranted . . . | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| two white mice and a squirrel | 0 | 9 | 0 |

£13 17 6

Receeed the above as part set-off of chalks, cribbage, and put scores.

ROBERT SMUDGERTON.

And promises to take out the remainder in animals and drink.

At the bottom of this interesting document was written—

I agrees to the above.

TOM SHARP, his X mark.

Had any one seen the look which Mr. Subaudite cast on his protégé, the expectant tutor of this hopeful youth, they would never have forgotten it. It was the amalgam of disgust and despair.

“Let us leave him, let us leave him,” he said, sighing. “Oh that the Dean had taken my hint!”

“Hilloh! who are *you*? What the dev—! Oh, I really beg pardon. I have been—eh, where have I been? But you’ll take another tankard—don’t be regular muffs and say no,” said Bobby Smudge, rousing himself into an indistinct wakefulness.

“Mr. Smudgerton, I will sit down, and beg of my young friend, whom I meant to introduce to you as your tutor, to do the same, but we are really ——”

“And so am I,” said Bobby—“awfully dry—ring the bell! Oh, curse these college rooms, they never has any—how’s the governor? Quite right, I hope?”

“This is horrible,” said Mr. Subaudite.

“We had really better retire,” said his young friend.

“Pooh! — stuff! — we’ll soon have them filled again,” said Bobby, trying to get to the window to call his scout. He fell down, however, *in transitu*; the young man picked him up, and threw him rather than laid him upon his sofa, where he remained talking incoherently for some time.

“Dreadful! horrible! ah! ahah! what *is* this? take it off. I shall die, I know I shall. Ah! ah!” The first class man rushed to Mr. Subaudite’s assistance, and found a beautiful green snake curled round one of his legs. In less than one minute, the fellow-one of the “two snakes as is tame” was curling round the other leg, and poor Mr. Subaudite, who had a great horror of reptiles, fell flat upon the floor.

“Hurrah! he’s down!” shouted Master Bobby. “Thought me a mere country fool, but I have done him brown, very brown, indeed.”

“What is all this about?” said the Dean, entering the rooms with Lord Shorte—a most unusual and condescending act on the part of one of our Deans.

An explanation was speedily given. Mr. Subaudite was released from the poor, innocent snakes; and Master Bobby Smudge roused from his spirituous slumbers, but only to tell the Dean that he was a humbug; Lord Shorte, that his designs on him were “no go;” and Mr. Sabaudite and his young friend, the tutor *in posse*, that they might go to —— where we cannot mention.

“I give him up,” said Lord Shorte.

“I shall expel him,” said the Dean.

“Rusticate him for ever,” said the humane tutor; “it will do as well, and not be thought so severe a sentence.”

Mr. Bobby Smudge was allowed to take his name off the books, and went down to tell his friend, Mr. Gabberton Swift, how ill he had been used, accompanied by two setters, one pole-cat in pup, one one-eyed ferret, one magpie as talks, two snakes as is tame—no rats; for they were not warranted to keep—but two white mice and a squirrel.

“That’s enough! I catch it! You are done for life. No little Miss Lady Shorte for you,” said Mr. Swift.

“She be sniggled, or any thing else! I’ll go and enjoy life,” said Bobby Smudge.

He did enjoy life—but for a very short period, for he was bitten by a fox in the thumb, and died raving-mad.

Tom Sharp and his son Will, when they read of it in the papers, smoked an extra pipe, and said they were very sorry for it, for that Mr. Robert Smudgerton was such a very nice young man.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMEMORATION.

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
Pulsanda *Townhall* ; nunc *elegantioribus*,
Ornare *the tables of college*
Tempus erat, *spreadibus*, sodales.

HORATIUS ALTERATUS.

“ Well, I declare I am almost as wearied with telling you my tales,” said Tom, “ as I am at Commemoration-time, when my clapper is going from morning until night, or more poetically,

‘ From sunny morn to dewy eve.’ ”

“ Commemoration ! what is that ? ” I inquired.

“ The annual meeting whereat the Professor of Orotory (the Public Orator, as he is called) makes a very intelligible Latin speech

to the ladies, God bless them ! and to country gentlemen, on the merits and virtues of those antients who, from the best motives no doubt, founded colleges, endowed fellowships, and bequeathed livings and libraries for the promotion of literature and the comfort of learned men. It is also called the *Encænia*."

" *Encænia* ? why that is the name of a Jewish festival—the celebration of the building of the Temple. How does it apply to a Christian ceremony ?"

" Never you mind about that ; we call it by that name in Oxford, from Vice-Chancellor to Poker-Bearer, so it must be right : — *humanum est errare* does not apply to Oxford when classicality is called in question."

" Nor to our sister, Cambridge, I presume, when anything mathematical is on the *tapis*."

" Of course not ; neither of us can be *radically* wrong, for *we* spend our days in digging for Latin and Greek roots ; *they*

theirs in searching for the roots of cubes and all sorts of figures."

"It must be a most solemn and serious sight, this Commemoration," said I. "In raking up the *manes* of so many pious and charitable individuals, the minds of all must be—"

"Ah! ha! ha!" burst out Great Tom. "Bless your ignorant freshness! Gloomy! Serious! Stuff! The Commemoration-week is the jolliest in all the year. Such a crowd of lions and lionesses, with all their cubs and —"

"Oh! I suppose Wombwell comes down with his exhibition at that time. It must be a good speculation," said I.

Tom laughed in a succession of bom, bom, boms, which fairly shook his tower, and made me tremble for the stability of the beam above him.

"You are *very* green, indeed," said he, "not to know that, in Oxford, lions and lionesses mean masculine and feminine strangers, and cubs, their little dears of both sexes,

whom they bring up with them to see their brothers and the nice young men at college. If you have such a thing as a maiden aunt, a sister, or a cousin, mind and invite her to see you next June. You cannot please her more. What with balls, concerts, archery, and Latin speeches, boat-racing, champagning, and Blenheim and Nunehamizing, their days and nights fly like the champagne-corks, and their spirits flow like the ale-barrels in the college butteries."

"It must be very jolly, but rather expensive, I fear," said I.

"You an undergraduate, and talk of the expense of anything! Pooh! Tell them to put it down in the bill, and think of the amount when you have taken your degree. If you should not happen to think of it then, your purveyors will not fail to remind you of it. Like me, your tradesman can't go on ticking for ever without being wound up. Just lie still, and I will give you a notion of some of the fun of a Commemoration."

We had at one time two very lively brothers

up here together, who were very great favourites with everybody, from the Dean to the scouts' boys. They were full of fun, and always laughing themselves, or causing others to laugh; it was impossible to be dull in their company; for, what with jokes, and frolics, and harmless mischief—they had no real vice about them—they afforded every one a fund of amusement.

Their name was Leech, and how to distinguish the two when speaking of them afforded some little difficulty. Leech senior and Leech junior was too formal; old Leech and young Leech not appropriate, for each of them appeared to be of exactly the same age as the other. As to their christian names, the elder was called Horatio, and the younger Cicero, through the excessive classicality of their governor, and it was impossible to find the *short* for either of them, and to call them by their full length would not have been familiar enough. Altogether, it was a knot difficult to be untied; until one of our men, looking to the propensities of the pair—the elder being addicted to horses, and the

younger to agricultural pursuits—nicknamed them Horse-Leech and Cow-Leech, and by those names, degrading as they appeared at first, they were ever after known. It was some little time before they knew of the method by which they were distinguished; and when they were informed of it by what Sheridan calls a “d—d good-natured friend,” they were a little indignant, and felt inclined to resent the affront; but their good nature got the better of their resentment, and they burst out laughing, declaring the notion was not a bad one, and that they would pardon the impudence of their nicknamer, “for the fun of the thing.”

We all of us have our little peculiarities, and no wonder, therefore, that the Leeches had theirs. Horatio, or Horse-Leech, as I have said, was very fond of horses; but, although he was almost always with his own horses, or viewing the steeds of other men, he was not one of that kind of men who spend their lives in a stable, and in converse with grooms and hack-men. He was never seen sitting on a corn-bin, smoking cigars and

drinking beer with the helpers ; nor was he the familiar associate of coachmen and post-boys. He admired a good team of horses as much as any one, and felt a great respect for a man who could drive them as they should be driven ; and although he preferred the box-seat upon a coach, and ever and anon handled the ribbons, and discoursed on the qualities of the leaders and wheelers, and even entertained the driver with a glass or two of sherry on a journey, he never forgot that he was a gentleman, and the man by his side, though a skilful driver, nothing but a mere driver—waggoner, is, I believe, the more fashionable name.

He never dealt with a dealer himself ; but, when he had inspected his stables, and demanded the price of any nag that took his fancy, he entered his name and colour, with his price, in his pocket-book, and left it to his groom to complete or resign the purchase of it. So cool, indeed, was his manner towards the impudent set who were accustomed to treat many gentlemen as their equals, and who really felt it a kind of compliment to be

looked upon in that light, that he was known in all the best stable-yards in Oxford by the title of "the reserved swell, as could only purchase by proxy." His judgment, however, was so good, and his liberality so notorious, that his appearance after a horse-fair was always hailed with pleasure.

The peculiar pursuit of the younger brother, Cow-Leech, was, as I have said, agriculture. He was almost mad on the subject. He would ride miles to see a ploughing-match or a cattle-show, and looked upon the best ploughman and the best fatter of beasts upon the paternal estate as somebody whose acquaintance was worth cultivating. When at home, he was up with that early riser the lark, and was seldom seen within doors during the day. His old pony, with a sort of wallet slung to his saddle-flaps, might be seen tied to a gate, or wandering and plucking the herbage at his leisure in some green lane, while its master was tossing the grass about in the hay season, or helping to pitch corn in the harvest-time, with a crowd of labourers round him, chatting freely with him, and

laughing at his "quips and cranks," merry jokes, and comic stories, as if they were not mere serfs of the soil. Yet Cicero was the master and gentleman with them. He never heard a rude remark, a vulgar expression, or an oath uttered in his presence. Every labourer felt that he was in the presence of a superior as well as a friend. They toiled harder than they would have done for any other master, and sought no extra reward for their exertions, but his approbation, and an occasional supply from the well-filled casks of the Grange cellars, when they had earned the indulgence by a day of excessive toil. They were paid no more wages than they would have been paid by a renting-farmer, though they worked much harder; and yet, out of the numerous ricks and corn-stacks that stood on the various farms upon Colyton Grange, not one had ever been fired, although some of the neighbouring farms had not escaped the visits of incendiaries.

The old Squire was rather a curious character. He had been an Eaton boy and an Oxford man. At school he was notorious

for an inability to do a copy of Latin verses without filling up a long line, if he wanted an ending to it, with *Proh ! Jupiter inquit*. As he introduced this, his favourite phrase, into sacred as well as profane subjects, it got him into several birchical scrapes, and procured him the *sobriquet* of Jupiter Leech, which, of course, adhered to him after he entered at Oxford.

At the University, from his ill-success, probably at school, he felt no ambition to shine as a classical constellation. He hated the classics, if the truth must be told, and, in order to amuse himself, began to cultivate the science of natural philosophy. Great was the dismay of the learned professor of that science, when he issued his terminal notice of a lecture, and found it answered by a would-be pupil. His office had hitherto been a sinecure, but now he must read up and give a lecture. He wisely selected the most abstruse subject he could think of, and treated it still more abstrusely. The *ruse* had the desired effect. The pupil was so utterly confounded by the string of long and hard

words with which the lecture was loaded, that he begged leave to withdraw his name from the class ;—he had no taste for the pursuit of knowledge, under difficulties so great as were placed before him by the erudite lecturer, but contented himself with reading and experimentalizing in his own rooms, greatly to the detriment of the furniture, which was not improved by the apartment being converted into a laboratory. He wrote several very elaborate treatises on pneumatics, electricity, chemistry, and galvanism—for he did not confine himself to any particular branch of science—and sent them to the best conducted journals of the day : but whether he wrote badly or did not throw any fresh light upon his subject, or was too little known in scientific circles to insure a reception, I cannot say ; I can only assert, that of his numerous contributions, not one appeared in print until he condescended to send a paper to a newly-born, cheap, weekly chronicle, treating on “ science made easy to the meanest capacities ;” wherein he learnedly discussed “ the causes of the appearance of

duck-weed on the surface of ponds and ditches."

So delighted was the Squire with the kindness of the editor in inserting this article, and so pleased at seeing himself in Bourgeois type, that he bought 100 copies of No. 1., and went to a great expense in sending them off by post to all his acquaintances; and a great deal of trouble in writing letters to assure them that the paper signed Investigator was *his*. Even in after-life, a copy of this No. 1. always occupied a conspicuous place on the book-table, and any one who wished to be invited to stop and dine at Colyton Grange had only to take it up and appear to be absorbed by the paper signed Investigator, to ensure his wishes being fulfilled.

The Squire did not go up for a degree, or even for his responsions, but, as his father died early, he left college, married a neighbouring lady, and settled down quietly at the Grange, where he would have pursued practically those studies which his lady, dreading the effects of acids and alkalies upon

carpets and curtains, and fumes of gases on her husband's constitution, compelled him to attend to only in theory. He amused himself very harmlessly, in keeping tables of the weather; the rises and falls of thermometer and barometer; wrote several profound treatises on meteorology, which were not inserted in the journals to which they were sent, and spent all his leisure time in trying to get himself made a fellow of some scientific society; but, as he went to work to effect his object in a straightforward way, he did not succeed.

As he was a good master, a kind neighbour, and never *acted* as a justice of the peace, although he was enrolled in the list of his county, he was very much beloved; and, in spite of his eccentricities and very prosy lectures after dinner, Colyton Grange was seldom without a succession of visitors.

The Squireess was a placid, calm, country lady, who had acted the hospitable hostess and the Lady Bountiful to the satisfaction of high and low, rich and poor; and, as long as every thing was neat and tidy about her, and her servants were attentive to their duties,

and cleanly in their habits and personal appearance, and the poor, who were the objects of her benevolence, were respectful in their demeanour and attended their parish church regularly, cared not a dump for what was going on in the other parts of the world. Her family was reduced by deaths, at different periods, to the two boys, Horatio and Cicero; and, of course, she believed them to be the very models of adolescence.

There was another member of the family whom I must introduce, as he will appear upon my stage hereafter. This was a brother of the Squire's, known to every body in the Grange, and without it, as Uncle Tom. No one ever spoke of him or called him by any other name. If he had been saluted as Mr. Thomas Leech, I doubt whether he would have known if he were the person addressed.

He was an odd-looking man, for his mouth was a little out of the horizontal, and he squinted with one eye, which did not turn inwardly over his nose, but outwardly over his right shoulder. He was conscious of this defect in the arrangement of his optics,

and to hide it he had a trick, if he was speaking to any one, of throwing his head over his right shoulder, the side on which the queer eye was situated, and looking with the one good eye at the person whom he addressed.

He had been brought up at Eton with his brother, but refused to go to college, as he preferred staying at home and looking over the farms, and more especially the garden, of which he was very fond, and really understood the cultivation. He had his peculiarity, and it was this,—he could not bear the presence of any woman, except his sister-in-law. It was said that he had made violent love to a lady in his early days, and had been jilted by her for a recruiting-sergeant, who, like Mr. Patrick Carey, had the outward essentials of manhood more fully developed than Uncle Tom, who was slight and slender, and rather effeminate in appearance. This feeling caused him to absent himself from his brother's table whenever female visitors were at the Grange, and as that occurred frequently he was rarely a guest at the dinner-table.

Uncle Tom was of great service to his philosophic brother; for, when the boys were away from home, he took upon himself the management of the stud, and the overlooking of the farms, and received all the rents, and paid all the bills. This, too, he did in so business-like a way that no lawyer was needed to manage affairs at Colyton Grange. He had a fortune independent of his brother, which he nursed with the greatest care, meaning to bestow it in equal portions on his nephews at his decease, provided they married parties whom he might deem eligible partners, and not likely to jilt them.

Having thus introduced some of my chief *dramatis personæ* as briefly as I well could, to make the little events I am about to record understandable, you will oblige me by fancying yourself in the breakfast-parlour at Colyton Grange, on the morning of a very fine day in the beginning of June.

The Squire and his lady are *vis-à-vis*, and Uncle Tom between them in his usual fustian shooting-coat, cord-shorts, and long leather gaiters. Two ladies are visiting at the Grange,

but, as Uncle Tom knows that they have their coffee and rolls taken up to them in their dressing-rooms, he has ventured in to breakfast. In the midst of the repast, the letter-bag is brought in, and the Squire, with great ceremony, selects a key from the bunch of seals, rings, and keys attached to his watch-chain, and opens it; he performs the operation rather nervously, for he hopes that it may contain an announcement that he has been elected an F.R.S., or that his paper "On the Prevalence of Gossamers in Nut-tree Covers in the Months of September and October" has been accepted by the scientific periodical to which he has sent it for the fifth time. Uncle Tom, who never expects a letter from any body, goes on quietly with his rasher, and Mrs. Leech amuses herself by looking at her list, to see to what number of poor widows, bed-ridden old men, and young labourers' wives in interesting conditions, she is to send those little comforts which make life something more than bearable.

"Bless me! it's very odd! unaccountably so! No letter from the society! no notice of

my paper!" said the Squire, laying a letter, a note, and a newspaper aside, as if valueless.

"You've said so every day for these twelve years," said Uncle Tom, looking at his sister-in-law, but looking as if he was looking at her husband.

"Never mind, my dear, leave the F.R.S.'s to themselves; and as to your paper, write another, it will amuse you, and do quite as much good as if it were printed," said the lady.

"It's very odd! unaccountably odd, marm! that you have made that same observation every morning for many years — vary it, marm, vary it," said the Squire, slowly removing his spectacles, pulling his chair up to the table, and going on with his meal.

"That's a hand I ought to know," said Uncle Tom, putting the letter upon the point of his right shoulder to get a clear view of the direction. "Why, it is from Horatio, and bears the Oxford postmark."

"Give it to me, Tommy, give it to me," said the lady. "The dear boy! how clear he writes!"

“Only a little request for money, to pay off the terminal ticks, I’ll be bound,” said the Squire; “but read it, marm, read it; it’s very odd, unaccountably odd, that you women never will open a letter until you have read the direction ten times over, and examined it, from the seal to the postmark, as if you had never seen them before.”

Mrs. Leech did what her husband called so “unaccountably odd” very deliberately, and then still more deliberately went to her work-table and looked for a pair of scissors to cut the paper round the seal, for fear of tearing away some valuable portion of the written interior; Uncle Tom eyeing her all the while, although he seemed to be looking in a contrary direction.

“It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that you will not read that letter aloud, marm.”

“Oh, it is merely to say they break up—”

“*Go down*, marm; they never *break-up* after they leave school.”

“Well, go down on the 15th—that they want you to send a cheque for £250, and that they are to have a grand Commemoration

this year, and a great many grand folks are to be honoured with degrees. There is a list of names, but I don't know any of them; and then there is a lot of inquiries about the colts and fillies from Horatio; and a postscript from Cicero, full of questions about the crops, the wool, and the next ploughing-match—that is all.”

“It's very odd, unaccountably odd, marm, that you cannot either read my boy's letter yourself, or let me read it,” said the Squire.

“Or me, marm,” said Uncle Tom; “you know *I* must answer it.”

“Well, there it is; read it while I go and see that old Richard has the village basket properly filled,” said the lady, handing the letter to her husband, who had it quietly taken out of his hand by Uncle Tommy before she could make her exit.

Uncle Tommy put the letter upon his right shoulder and read it aloud. There was nothing in it that had not been alluded to in the brief summary of its contents by the Squire; but a name had reached the Squire's ear, when the list of those who were to have honorary

degrees conferred upon them was read, that engaged his most serious attention.

“It is very odd, unaccountably odd; but I think, Tommy, you said that the Baron Von Inkstandhausen of Heidelberg is to receive an honorary D.C.L.?”

“To be sure—who is he?”

“It is very odd, unaccountably odd, how very ignorant you are, brother Tom, on subjects connected with science! The Baron Von Inkstandhausen is a great natural philosopher, and has made his name illustrious from discovering the anatomical cause of the wonderful agility and powers of jumping possessed by that curious little insect the flea.”

“What, is he the man who goes about with the industrious fleas?” asked Uncle Tom.

“Very odd, unaccountably odd! Such ignorance! but then it’s excusable in a man who despises science, and sticks to the stable and the farmyard. The Baron Von Inkstandhausen is a man whose acquaintance I, in common with all scientific men, would give worlds to obtain.”

“Then why do you not go up to Oxford

and get introduced to him? I dare say he would give you his most intimate friendship for a good dinner and the run of the wine-bin; you can take a jar of pickled cabbage in your pocket, and call it *saur-kraut*, and if that don't *clench* your acquaintance with him I do not know what will."

The Squire frowned at Uncle Tom, and said it was unaccountably odd that he should entertain such degrading ideas of a German philosopher. He added, much to Uncle Tom's surprise, that he should take his advice for once, and go up to Oxford for the purpose of renewing his acquaintance with some old friends, and being properly introduced by the Professor of Chemistry to the Baron Von Inkstandhausen.

"Then I must go with you," said Uncle Tom; "for you know so little of what you call mere mundane affairs, that you will be cheated by every postboy and turnpike-keeper on the road."

"Go with me! of course you will. Do you think I could travel without you? It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that you should

dream of such a thing! We will post up; so order the chariot and everything to be ready by the 13th. I must prepare a few things to take up with me, to amuse the boys and their friends."

Uncle Tom *slewed* his eye round over his shoulder, and threw a look of inquiry into it; but, as he seemed to be looking at the peacock on the terrace wall, the Squire did not reply to it, but retired to his study to commence his preparations. Mrs. Leech, who, in spite of her husband's complaint, that "it was very odd, unaccountably odd, that she would interrupt him in his studies," went into the room every hour to see that he was not mixing acids and alkalies, analyzing earths, and making combustibles, wondered what he was about to do with several queer-looking machines, the names and uses of which she knew not, and which he was diligently engaged in packing into as small a space as possible. When she heard that he was going up to Oxford to the Commemoration, she thought that he was going to sell some of his useless machinery to some erudite individuals in that

learned University who would be able to turn them to a better account than he had done, and was highly pleased; so she did not interrupt him any more, but amused herself with seeing that everything he would want, and many things that he would not want, were properly prepared for the journey.

Uncle Tom considerably thought that the boys would like to be apprised of their father's intention of paying them a visit, as he knew that many little arrangements would require to be made in their rooms, to render them in a fit state to be visited by the governor; he therefore sat down, and in a very odd position, for he was obliged to look sideways at the paper before him, much as a duck does when he is eyeing a worm at the bottom of a deep ditch. He wrote the following characteristic letter, in which he enclosed a cheque for £300 :—

“Colyton Grange, June 10th.

“My dear Boys,

“Brother and I dine with you on the 13th, at half-past 5 precise. Mother stays at

home. Procure beds handy, and not at an inn, as they are apt to be *one-horse-chaisey*! Hem! You know what I mean—hate *bugs* and *humbugs*. Enclosed is cheque for £300. No ticks or antics while the governor is in view, eh? Horatio, all the horses are well, and the fillies and colts going on famously. Cicero, the wheats are in bloom, the beans in pod, and the pease fit for hacking. The clovers run short, but the stock are all well, and so are the labourers. More, both of you, when we meet.

“ Your affectionate uncle,

“ TOM.

“ PS. Brother is packing up some of his queer traps, to astonish a Baron—Von Inkstandhausen by name. If you know him, ask him to dinner, and be sure give him some pickled cabbage—he’s a German.”

Having completed and sealed this epistle, Uncle Tom set about ordering the chariot and post-horses to be ready early on the morning of the 13th, and then went round the stables and farms, to give such directions

as he thought would ensure the comforts of the animals, and the proper progress in farming operations during his short absence.

The Oxford brothers were breakfasting together in the rooms of the elder, Horatio, and were violently engaged in getting up a Greek play for their collections, amidst coffee, rolls, and strawberries, when the letter from Uncle Tom arrived. Horatio laughed heartily when he had read it, and handed it to his brother, who joined him in the laugh at first, and then suddenly stopped and looked serious.

“The idea of the Governor and Uncle Tom. coming up!” said Horatio.

“And the notion of asking an unknown German quack to dinner, and entertaining him with pickled cabbage!” said Cicero. “Can’t we put them off? for you know that we have invited a lot of men—the racing crew, and the crew of the *Torpids*, to supper on the 13th.”

“No; it will not do. Besides, what does it matter? Uncle Tom is a regular brick,

and will enjoy the fun, and I do not think that the governor will dislike it. We will get the German, if he is presentable, and can find any one to introduce us to him. He, I hope, will not find fault with the hock."

"If he does not like it, he can send us over an aume, if he pleases, ready for his next visit," said Cicero; "but it strikes me that it will be as well to send for the upholsterer to put our rooms a little in order before the arrival of papa, eh?"

"Oh, nonsense! He knows what college is, and I see nothing he can object to or complain about here."

"Why, I do not think a sofa with a loose back and three legs, or a reading-chair with one arm amputated, and a set of rickety dining-tables, at all desirable; and I do think that if the meerschaums, boxing-gloves, tandem-whips and bridles, were taken down from their nails, the rooms would look a little less like a pawnbroker's shop," said Cicero.

"Yes, true enough; and Uncle Tom would rather be displeased than not at the sight of your collection of operatic and theatrical

female favourites; so you must down with them, and replace them with something wherewith his modesty will not be shocked."

"And that Venus must be dressed or discarded, that is very certain, and Mistress Psyche would look all the better if she were clad in a decent garb; but we will send for old Scraper the furniture-man, and give him orders to settle the rooms soberly and snugly. Now let us knock off the last five hundred lines of Madame Medea, and then go and get lodgings for our visitors."

The play was finished, and the lodgings—two good bedrooms at Adams's, the bootman, opposite my tower—engaged before twelve o'clock. The cook was ordered to prepare a good dinner in their rooms on the 13th, for which leave was easily obtained from the Dean, when the visit of Leech *père*, with his brother, was made known to him. As both the Squire and Uncle Tom were fond of port wine, the afternoon was pleasantly spent in tasting the best that Syms and all the other wine-merchants could produce.

Now tasting wine in hot weather is very

agreeable, but rather dangerous, as, instead of performing the operation in the scientific method adopted by the trade, the thirst occasioned by the thermometer at 80° is apt to induce one to swallow the contents of the glasses submitted to us for our approbation. The brothers, who were generally very moderate in their potations, were the least in the world overcome by the number of wines they had tasted ; and when they had decided upon the style of wine best suited to the Governor's taste—full-flavoured, oleaginous, yet leaving a delicious roughness upon the palate instead of the nauseating sugar-sweetness which spoils the ports of modern days—they issued from the cellars with rather unsteady steps and flushed countenances.

“We are too late for hall-dinner, *per Jovem!*” said Horatio, looking up at Carfax clock.

“So we are. Well, never mind,” said Cicero ; “let us have a lamb-chop at the Star ; the cook there has a proper notion of his art.”

A few minutes found them in the coffee-

room of that, then, well-frequented hotel. Several men were dining there ; but the moment they had eaten their chops they took up their caps and gowns, and went off to some friend's rooms to wine.

When Horatio and Cicero Leech had finished their cheese, and ordered a bottle of cool claret, there was but one individual besides themselves left in the room ; and a very odd-looking individual he was. He wore a lanky, yellow-tinged pair of mustachoes, with whiskers completely covering his chin, to correspond ; his hair was parted in the centre, and combed down straight over the collar of his coat ; his deeply-seated blue eyes were covered with a large pair of tortoiseshell-mounted spectacles, and his nose was begrimed with yellow snuff, which he was perpetually employed in taking from a large jewelled silver box. He was dressed in long-waisted, dark-green frock-coat, drab trousers, and very square-toed boots. He had finished his dinner, and was sipping some Rhenish wine. By his side lay a large handsome *écume-de-mer* pipe, and a bladder containing

tobacco, which he had pushed on one side when the waiter assured him that no smoking was allowed in the coffee-room.

“What a guy!” said Horatio, not quite *sotto voce*.

“A regular quiz, *et nullus error!*” said Cicero.

“Let us drink to his very particular salubrity. He is a foreigner, and don’t understand English, I dare say, so we ought to be civil to him. Here goes, old fellow!—here’s to all friends over the Herring Pond,” said Horatio.

“Your jolly health, old gentleman!” added Cicero.

Now, as both of them, in tossing off their bumpers, did so in a peculiar way, although they were not aware of it, the stranger smiled a joyous smile, filled his tumbler—for he despised a diminutive wine-glass—and made the same sort of motion with his hand ere he emptied it. He then left his seat, brought his bottle and tumbler with him, and, placing himself at the brothers’ table, seized their right hands successively, and gave them such

a severe grip as made them glad when the operation was over.

"I am delight to find two *proders*; we shall unite and enjoy ourselves more as if we was strangers," said the foreigner.

"How the deuce could he know we were *brothers*?" whispered Horatio.

"By a family likeness, I suppose. But let us draw him out, and get some fun out of him," said Cicero.

"Beautiful box that, sir," said Horatio.

"Ya, ya, yash, de pox is a peautiful pox, and was given to me by my var good vriend de Brince, when I bresented to him a copy of ma pook."

"Oh, you're an author, are you?" asked Cicero.

"Ya, ya, yash; I have bublish mosh."

"On what subject, may I ask?"

"Oh, I write mosh—vare mosh; put principally on de insect and de worm—what you shall call de natural history," said the stranger.

"I say, Cicero, I'll venture a pony that

this is the very German whom the Governor is coming up to be introduced to."

"Gad! if so, we're in luck. Sound him!"

"Sound him! I'll ask him at once. Have I the honour of speaking to the Baron—?"

"Ya, ya, yash, I am de Paron, ma young vriends and proders."

"The Baron Von Inkstandhausen?" said Cicero.

"What is dat? Bronounce him again."

"The Baron Von Inkstandhäusen," said Horatio, slowly and plainly.

"Ya, ya, yash; dat is how I am call; put you bronounce him so English-like, I not know him at virst."

"My dear sir, I am delighted to see you. My father, Mr. Leech of Colyton Grange, in Northamptonshire, is coming up to-morrow on purpose to make your acquaintance. He is fond of science, thinks himself a great natural philosopher, and has written a great deal on the subject, though he has only published one paper—'On the Cause of Duckweed in Ponds and Ditches.' Did you ever meet with it?"

“Ma dare young vriend, I nevere travel widout it, it is so vare clevere,” said the Baron, taking a larger pinch than usual. “I shall mosh like to be known to your Bappa.”

“Well, then, you must come and dine with him at my rooms to-morrow, at half-past five,” said Horatio, handing the Baron his card.

“Come and breakfast, and spend the day,” said Cicero. “We’ll lionize you!”

“Ma coot vriends, you overbower me. Put I nevere preak ma fast—nevere; I only take de bipe and de coffee in ma ped. I will have great bleasure in making de acquaintance of your excellent bappa at de dinner,” said the Baron. “And now, as we are broders, I shall order some wine of a petter quality, and we shall drink at mine exbense.”

The Baron rang the bell, and ordered in half a dozen of Rudesheimer in ice, and the party spent a most agreeable evening; the young men assuring one another, as they went to their rooms, not at all the worse for the cool light wine they had been drinking, that they had never met with a more agreeable

and accomplished man than the Baron in their lives.

“Very gentlemanly, too, of him to pay for the wine,” said Cicero—“very indeed!”

Precisely at a quarter past five on the Tuesday, the day before the Commemoration, amidst the number of carriages that arrived in Oxford, the chariot from Colyton Grange might have been seen pulling up at my tower gateway. Cicero was standing ready to receive his father and uncle, while Horatio was busily employed in decanting the wine. A few minutes sufficed for the Squire and Uncle Tom to dress for dinner; and as soon as they had reached the young men’s rooms, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen arrived, very superbly dressed, and was introduced in due form to Squire Leech, who nervously grasped his hand, and expressed himself as too highly honoured by the condescension of so great a man. Uncle Tom threw a look at the Baron over his right shoulder, and whispered to Horatio that “he wanted trimming about the muzzle, and that his mane would be none the worse for being pulled and combed.”

The dinner was excellent, and every one did justice to it; but no one came near the Baron, who, although there was no pickled cabbage provided, ate enormously, and apologized for it by saying, "he had noting all day pefore put his bipes."

When the wine and dessert were placed on the table, and the servants had retired, the Squire filled a bumper, and proposed—"The scientific world; more particularly the gentleman who had honoured them with his company that day." It was drunk with enthusiasm by all, and *in iisdem verbis*, except by Uncle Tom, who had a bad memory for words, and took off his bumper to "the aforesaid."

The Baron bowed, with his right hand, covered with rings and rather dirty about the nails, upon his left breast, and, seizing upon a tumbler, which was placed near the water-jug in the centre of the table, filled it to the brim; then, acknowledging the compliment that had been paid him, briefly but gratefully drained his goblet at a draught, and sat

down, saying, "that the borts was cool wines, but sboiled de plood."

Horatio took the hint, and placed some claret near his guest, with another tumbler, which was speedily filled and emptied to the health of the Squire, who, in returning thanks, went through the rise and progress of the science of natural philosophy *ab ovo usque ad mala*, and ended his long oration by again expressing his delight at forming the acquaintance of a man upon whom the eyes of every scientific person were turned with admiration.

The Baron smiled and bowed ; but, catching Uncle Tom's queer eye turned upon him, not very scientifically, burst into a loud laugh, in which the brothers, when they caught the cause of it, could not refrain from joining.

"As dere is no lady, and dis is de brivate rooms, I will make pold and light ma bipe," said the Baron, extracting his meerschaum and tobacco-bag from his coat-pocket, and proceeding composedly to strike a light with flint, steel, and German tinder.

Now the poor Squire had a great aversion to the fumes of tobacco at all times, but especially when he was drinking his port wine. But what could he do? He could not interfere with the enjoyments of the greatest natural philosopher of his day, one who was about to be presented with an honorary D.C.L. on the morrow. He submitted, with a bad grace however, much to Uncle Tom's amusement, who looked at the Baron, and winked ; but, as his eye was directed to a corner book-shelf, that learned foreigner did not think it was intended for him, so he did not return it.

The Squire proposed many toasts, and made many remarks which he thought calculated to draw his son's guest into a philosophic discussion ; but he was deceived, for the Baron merely bowed, and drank, and smoked his pipe, seldom making a remark, beyond "a peautiful pottle and peautiful topacco!"

This was very vexing ; and, in order to ensure a display of the Baron's learning, the Squire put a direct question to him, which ought to have elicited a learned disquisition

on some peculiarly difficult point, which agitated the erudite minds of all natural philosophers at that particular time.

“Ma var dear sar,” said the Baron, rolling out a volume of smoke, “pusiness is pusiness, and bleasure is bleasure: bleasure to-day—pusiness to-morrow.” Nor would he say another word; so that the Squire did all the loud talking, while Uncle Tom held a whispered conversation about the horses and colts with Horatio, and about turnips and swedes with Cicero.

“My dear father,” said Horatio, when the time for coffee arrived, “I know you will excuse our leaving you over your coffee with the Baron. The fact is, we had invited the boat’s crew to sup with us to-night before we got your letter, so we could not put them off, but have ordered supper in another man’s rooms.”

“Uncle Tom will join us,” said Cicero; “and you and the Baron can do a little bit of philosophy.”

“Mosh opliged,” said the Baron; “put I would rather do a pit of subber.”

“And I,” said the Squire, “should like to

join your young friends, and see them all enjoying themselves."

"Hurrah!" said Horatio. "Come along, Governor, and let us be jolly!"

"Come along, Baron," said Uncle Tom. "You are not a bad fellow for a foreigner; you can be jolly."

"Ah, ah! you have de eye—what an eye—for de caractare—de phizionomy, eh!"

Uncle Tom felt inclined to knock the Baron down, but he looked so innocent, that Tom thought, after all, he could not have meant the allusion to his divergent eye as an insult.

When they reached the supper-rooms, they found about eighteen men ready assembled, to whom Horatio introduced his father and Cicero, his uncle and the Baron. The unexpected addition of three "old stagers" threw a little damp cloud over the party at first; but it was soon dissipated when the Squire, who was a little affected by his wine and the great deal of talking he had done, cut several very good jokes, and Uncle Tom and the Baron invited everybody to take wine with them. They were soon "hail, fellow! well met!"

The Baron, although he had eaten enough for three at dinner, did great execution on the "proiled pones," and finished off with a large plate of dressed crab. As soon as he had washed down his last plate with some "prown peer," as he called the "pottled borter," he lighted up his "bipe" again, and smoked away as calmly as if he had known all the party all his life.

The Squire and Uncle Tom stopped until the supper was removed and the punch and other liquids placed on the table; they then withdrew, wisely thinking that they should operate as skids on the wheels of joviality.

The Baron said "he should stay and finish his bipe and taste de bonch; he was vare fond of de bonch, put he should speak a word with his coot vrend de Squire in brivate first."

They withdrew into Horatio's bedroom, in the rooms above those in which the supper-party had been held. There, the Baron, after apologizing for the trouble he had given to his "coot vriend," informed him that a remittance which he had expected was not

arrived, and he would be glad of the loan of “twenty or dirty bounds to bay his fees with on to-morrow.”

The Squire, quite delighted at the opportunity of obliging so great a natural philosopher, took out his pocket-book, and gave him a bank-note for £50.

The Baron shook him cordially by the hand, and assured him “he would feel vare habby when he saw him rebaid.”

The Squire and Uncle Tom then left for their lodgings, and the Baron returned to the supper-rooms and resumed his pipe. After listening to many songs, and drinking many toasts, he was called upon, in his turn, for a song or a toast. He complied by singing a German student’s song very well, of which the chorus was

“Edite, bibite,” &c., &c.

When every one had sung every song he knew, and the party was getting rather slow, the Baron asked his next neighbours “if they ever blayed with the cards?” He was answered affirmatively, and asked to take a hand at *Van John*, as *ringt-et-un* is classically called at Oxford.

The cards were speedily produced; and whilst some of the party amused themselves with their cigars, and singing and talking, a table was made up at *vingt-et-un*. The Baron lost at first, but, when the stakes were doubled, and even quadrupled, his luck began to turn. He won back all he had previously lost, and a little more. He lost so good-naturedly, and won so carelessly—smoking his “bipe,” and drinking his “bonch” all the while—that every one was delighted with him, and he received a great many invitations to breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, all of which he was obliged to decline, because “he had promised his vare coot vriend, Mistir Squire Leech, to be his guest, and live at his exbense, while he remained in Oxford.”

When they were nearly tired of cards, the natural philosopher condescended to teach them a new German game with the dice. The boxes were produced, and every one in the room staked a sovereign each. Every one then threw three times, and was at liberty to sell his own chance, or buy any other person's: the highest thrown, or the purchaser of

the highest throw, to win the pool. This caused a great deal of speculation and a great deal of betting; and, oddly enough to the Baron, who kept his hands in his pockets until he threw, which he always did last, won seven stakes out of eleven, besides several sums by betting the odds against every caster. A little hazard concluded the evening at about half-past four; and it was quite light when the Baron parted with his young friends at my gateway, assuring them "that their bonch was coot, their bort was coot, and every thing vare bleasant," and that "he should nevere be aple to repay their cootness."

When Horatio and his brother had breakfasted with the Squire and Uncle Tom, all the party agreed to walk up to the Star, and call on the great natural philosopher.

"Waiter," said Horatio, "is the Baron Von Inkstandhausen up yet?"

"Who, sir? We have no such name on our list," replied he of the napkin.

"I mean the gentleman who wined with us, or rather with whom we wined,—half a dozen

of iced Rudesheimer, you know,—the day before yesterday.”

“ Oh, I know—gent. with smellers. I’ll go up and see, sir.”

The party sat down in the coffee-room; and William returned, and, in a whisper said, “ The man with the smellers has bolted with a basket of master’s plate, and left his trunk, which we have broken open, and found full of valuable—brickbats.”

Here was a pretty business ! Upon inquiry, it was discovered that the Baron was a London pickpocket, who had come down on a speculation. He succeeded pretty well; for, in addition to the Squire’s £50, it was found that he had carried off £300 from the young men whom he had so kindly taught the new German game with the dice.

The Squire was greatly disgusted, but Uncle Tom threw such a queer look over his right shoulder at his nephews, that they burst out laughing, in which, after a time, their father joined.

“ Come, my dear father,” said Horatio to

Squire Leech, as they quitted the Star Inn, after the unpleasant discovery of the sham Baron's real character; "if you intend to go to the University sermon at St. Mary's, you must not delay. The service begins at eleven, and it is already past ten."

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd," replied the Squire of Colyton Grange, "that in these days young men never speak of any thing, or any event, with that accuracy which, as philologists, they ought to observe."

"In what have I betrayed any inaccuracy?" inquired Horatio, not a little surprised at his father's testiness.

"You called it 'the University sermon' at St. Mary's, and it is not the University sermon. The University have nothing to do with it, as a University. It is the Infirmary sermon, and is preached to increase the funds of that most excellent institution, founded by the renowned Dr. Radcliffe."

"But, sir, the Vice-Chancellor, and all the Dons, go in procession with the black-beadles, and poker-bearers, and ——"

"Cicero, don't be vulgar. Call men and

things by their right names," said Mr. Leech, addressing his younger son, from whom the remark proceeded. "If you had spent as many years in the study of natural philosophy as your father has, you would not have confounded a beadle with a beetle."

"I have heard both of them confounded pretty heartily, sir,—the former by some of our men, who do not like paying their fees, at degree times, and the latter by our house-keeper, when she has found them committing trespasses in her jars of brown sugar."

"Gently, there, Cicero, my boy," said Uncle Tom. "Your father has mounted his hobby, and he does not like to have his ride spoilt."

"His hobby seems rather inclined to kick this morning," whispered Cicero: "we must put the strap on."

"The strongest strap that ever was sewed will not keep your father from kicking over the traces, if he has once set to hammering. Just hark!—he's off. I thought so," replied Uncle Tom, in a subdued voice.

Cicero listened, and heard his father in-

dulging in a long harangue, in which he was scolding Horatio, for supposing, for an instant, that he should go to the Radcliffe Infirmary sermon, until he had fulfilled the principal object of his journey to Oxford, by obtaining an introduction, through his friend, the professor of chemistry, to the *veritable* natural philosopher, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen, by whose double he had been so grossly imposed upon, and defrauded of fifty pounds, in addition to having been made the laughing-stock, *ludibrium*, of the whole philosophical world, who would, he doubted not, shortly be furnished with all the particulars of the “new case of soft-headedness,” displayed in himself.

Horatio, of course, could do nothing else but consent to the arrangement suggested by his father, and offered to accompany him to the house of the professor of chemistry at once. But, no: that would not do. Leech *père* chose to go alone. He would have no one present at their interview; “doubtless,” as Uncle Tom remarked, *sotto voce*, throwing

his queer eye over his right shoulder, at his younger nephew, "because he was afraid that in recounting the trick the sham Baron had played him, the irresistible ludicrousness of the whole proceeding would produce a loud laugh at his expense."

The point was conceded. A proposition was made that the family should all of them meet in the porch of St. Mary's church, at eleven o'clock; but to that the Squire would not agree. He had made up his mind to pass a philosophical day with the professor of natural philosophy. He would not, however, injure the institution, for whose benefit the sermon was to be preached, by his unavoidable absence from service, but gave Horatio a five-pound note, to put into the plate.

"Well, then, sir, you will perhaps attend the morning concert at three o'clock, and dine in our rooms at seven?" said Horatio.

"It is very odd, unaccountably odd, that I am to be dragged every where but where I wish to go," said the Squire. "You know that I have a contempt for music, as a mere

mechanical art, without any philosophy in it. Any fool can play on a fiddle or a flute."

"But, sir, all the ladies will be there—all the lionesses," &c., began Cicero.

"Then let them fancy themselves she-bears, and dance to the music," said the Squire.

"Give him his head," said Uncle Tom; "he's off. The only chance is to let him go his own pace, until he pulls up of his own accord."

"But as to dinner, sir?" said Horatio.

"At six precisely, in your rooms. As to a party, I shall bring the Professor and the Baron with me; and I have a few little things to exhibit, which will afford them all a rational evening. Order the largest table-cloth in college to be in readiness when coffee is announced; and, do you hear, provide some good hock, but none of your wishy-washy claret."

So saying, Squire Leech left the party, and turned off towards the residence of his old friend the professor of chemistry.

"What can he mean by wanting a large table-cloth?" inquired Cicero.

“Probably,” said Horatio, “he means to give a supper *en philosophe*, and wishes to prepare it himself?”

“Missed your leap,” said Uncle Tom. “He has got a large box full of all sorts of engines, and intends to exhibit some of his queer machinery for the entertainment of his friends to his own satisfaction. He has never been able to assemble a philosophical party at the Grange since he knocked old Lady Grizzelton’s wig off, and dislodged her false teeth by administering an over-dose of the galvanic fluid.”

“Absurd!” said Horatio.

“Quite ridiculous!” said Cicero.

“But not the less true,” said Uncle Tom.

“And I am to ask a lot of men to dine, and miss the procession of boats, merely to witness tricks upon an air-pump or an electrifying machine?” said Horatio.

“Yes, and get known in the ’versity as ‘the gallanty showmen’ for the remainder of our college existence,” said Cicero.

“You’ve hit it—laid the whip on the right place,” said Uncle Tom.

“How?” asked both his nephews.

“He has brought one with him,” replied Uncle Tom, winking with his good eye, and looking at the procession, which had just left the schools, with the queer one.

There was not time for any further questioning, as crowds were hastening by them, and thrusting them from the *parvé*, which they had previously kept three abreast—“curricie fashion, with an outrigger,” as Uncle Tom expressed it; so they turned with the press, and sought an entrance into St. Mary’s. The church, however, was so full, that they retreated; but, in order that one of the finest institutions of which this country can boast might not suffer by their absence from the service in which its merits were brought before the public, and its interests ably advocated, they retired to a neighbouring stationer’s, and enclosed the Squire’s five-pound note, with its *fac-simile*, hitherto the property of Uncle Tom, to the secretary and treasurer of the Infirmary.

Horatio then left his uncle and brother to go and order dinner in his rooms, and secure

a party. The former was easily effected, as *Coquus* had laid in a large store of every thing in season ; but the latter was a work of some difficulty, as very few men were to be found in their rooms, and those few had engagements of some sort or another, and could not come. Out of his large circle of acquaintances, he could only secure the attendance of half a dozen, and those, unfortunately, the noisiest and most unphilosophical men in our house. His attempt to secure a few quiet out-college men was equally abortive, and for the same reason—they were all engaged, either having parties of their own, or having promised other men to join them. Horatio ordered dinner for twenty, and trusted to chance to fill up his table.

In the mean while, Uncle Tom and his other nephew, Cicero, in order to while away the day, took a stroll out of Oxford to see a model farm, which they fancied might give them a few new notions in improving the lands or crops, flocks or herds, when they returned to Colyton Grange.

As they sauntered up Headington Hill,

towards the spot whence they expected to add to their stock of agricultural knowledge, a carriage, an open barouche, met them, in which were seated a lady, rather past the prime of life, and an elderly gentleman. The box was occupied by a younger man, who, from the family likeness, might have been considered as the brother of the lady within. As the hind-wheel was locked to guard against the perils of the descent of so steep a hill as that of the village of Headington, our friends had an opportunity of observing the appearance of the occupants of the barouche as it proceeded slowly on its downward way. Cicero stared, rather rudely perhaps, and observed to his uncle that the lady put him in mind of a newly-tiled barn—her hair was so very red, and the gentleman on the box of a turkey-cock in a violent passion—as his whiskers strongly resembled the *wattles* of that very iracund bird.

Now, Uncle Tom, as I have said, had entertained a strong antipathy to the fair sex, since “the days that he was jilted in, a long time ago.” He never, therefore, looked upon

any woman, if he could avoid it, except his sister-in-law and the aged female domestics at the Grange. He smiled, for he could not help it, at his nephew's odd description of the passing travellers, and winked; but then his eye—the queer one, which was unfortunately next to the carriage—was directed, as he fondly thought, to the summit of a neighbouring elm-tree. That the lady thought different was evident; for, after giving her brother upon the box-seat a pretty hard poke with her parasol, she bowed and smiled benevolently at Uncle Tom; and the gentleman with whiskers like a turkey-cock's wattles lifted his hat. Even the old gentleman inside took off his hat when the carriage was nearly out of his sight, as if he had at length understood from the lady that Uncle Tom was an acquaintance of the family.

“Who are your friends?” asked Cicero.

“My friends!—what friends?” said Uncle Tom.

“The lady and the gentlemen who bowed so politely to you from the green barouche.”

“ Never saw them before in my life ; they must be *your* friends, Cicero.”

“ Thank you, uncle, but I had much rather not,” said Cicero ; “ but it was a mistake doubtless on their parts, only I must say that the lady seemed not only to recognise you herself, but anxious that the bushy individual on the box should do so too.”

“ It’s very odd, unaccountably odd, as your father would say ; but never mind. The chances are incalculable that we never see them again,” said Uncle Tom, following his nephew over a stile into a field of wheat, upon the merits or demerits of which they commenced descanting so earnestly, that the vision of the lady in the barouche was soon forgotten.

We must leave them investigating the crops, flocks, herds, and droves of the model farm, and return to Leech *père*.

The professor of chemistry in those days was one of our men. He had, however, with his professorship, accepted of a partner for life, and therefore could not reside in Christ-

church, but had taken a house in a retired part of Oxford. The house was not a desirable residence, either from its build or its locality ; but it had a large garden, and at the farthest corner of that garden, and at a distance from any other building, a large, old-fashioned greenhouse, capable of being converted at no great expense, and with perfect safety to the neighbourhood, into a laboratory. He might blow up himself in the course of his experiments, but others were safe. He was a quiet, laborious man, enamoured of his profession, though he never practised as a medical man ; and, as long as he was permitted to spend his days and the greater part of his nights in the pursuit of that interesting branch of his profession, chemistry, he was a happier individual than many, indeed any, who have no resource but in the pleasures of life, and what is called “ society.”

To the abode of his old college friend Squire Leech walked hastily. He knocked at the outer gates, and, upon inquiring of the servant if Doctor Phosphorus was at home, the

domestic replied, "No." There was a something, however, a kind of *suppressio veri*, in the manner in which this "no" was uttered that induced the Squire to make further inquiries, and to state his case thus: "I am sorry the Doctor is not at home, for I have come up from the country on purpose to see him; he is an old college friend, and I am sure he will be vexed when he finds that I have come up on purpose to see him, and been disappointed."

As he uttered these words, he put his hands into his waistcoat-pockets, and made a jingling noise like the rattling of silver or gold, and then looked the servant hard in the face.

Jonathan hemmed thrice, walked a little way from the gate into the garden, and, as the Squire followed, pointed to the formal greenhouse, and hemmed again. As he did so, he inadvertently, of course, turned round to shut the gate with his right hand, and his left was placed behind him with the palm extended; into that open palm the Squire dropped a crown-piece, and the fingers closed upon it convulsively; although the person to

whom the palm belonged took no further notice of anything, but, having fastened the gate, walked quietly up to the house. The door of the laboratory — the whilom greenhouse — stood invitingly open. Mr. Leech did not give any masonic signal, but entered. The place was darkened — artificially darkened — for an experiment was being tried, which was not calculated for the “eye of day.” It was a something or other in the combustible department of the *ars chymica*. His approach was not observed by the two persons, one the Professor, the other a stranger, who were busily engaged in stirring the materials for the experiment, in a huge crucible, until he called out, “Phosphorus, my old friend, I am delighted to find you.”

“Keep stirring for your life,” said Phosphorus, *continuetur agitatio*. “Leech, Jupiter Leech, I am glad to see you.”

After a very few brief inquiries into each other's welfare, during which the Professor was continually turning round to watch the progress of the composition in the crucible, and saying half audibly, “If he should but

stop stirring for one moment!" the Squire explained the object of his coming up to Oxford, namely, to be introduced to the great natural philosopher, the Baron Von Inkstandhausen.

"That's the man," said the Professor. "It is a great honour for so humble an individual as myself to entertain him in my house, and have his able assistance at a most interesting but rather dangerous experiment. We are on the nature of combustibles, and if he was to cease stirring that crucible but for one minute—bah! we should be gone; never seen again."

"And is that the great man—the Inkstandhausen?" asked the Squire. "Pray introduce me to him."

"Not for worlds *now*," said the Professor.

The Baron, however, had heard his name quoted, and when he looked up and saw a gentlemanly person talking with Doctor Phosphorus, he relinquished his stirabout, and advanced to meet him.

"Don't stir—but stir, stir, stir!" shouted Doctor Phosphorus, but too late. Before the

Baron could grasp the extended hand of the Squire, "phiz, whiz, spurt, bang!" The roof was blown off the building, and the trio, luckily unhurt, rose from the ground, begrimed with smoke, ashes, and dust.

"I told you how it would be," said Doctor Phosphorus; "I begged of you not to stir, but to keep on stirring, and you did stir instead of keeping stirring, and you see the consequences: allow me to introduce you to my friend Mr. Leech, of Colyton Grange, in ——"

"Bang!" went something else; and then several little diminutive "bangs" followed, at which the Baron, although he had been nearly knocked down again, clapped his hands with delight, and screamed, rather than said, "*J'avais raison — J'avais raison — him explode twice as vonce.*"

The professor of chemistry was vexed to think that he had been beaten by a foreigner, but could not but allow the fact; so, to hide his vexation, he employed himself in rubbing down the clothes of the Squire, which were covered with a liquid that had spirted from

the exploded crucible. He then rubbed the Baron down likewise, and last of all himself.

As the little bangs continued, much to the Baron's joy, who kept dancing about and clapping his hands, the Squire, whose zeal for science, though considerable, was not so great as to induce him to sacrifice life or limb in its service, made his escape from the laboratory, and was shortly followed by his friend and the Baron, to whom he was again introduced in due form.

It was rather amusing to see the Baron and the chemical professor, each holding the country gentleman and amateur philosopher by a coat-button; and, with their very black faces close to his smoked visage, endeavouring to enlighten him on the subject of the experiment which had just noisily reported the success of the Baron's theory. So earnest were they in impressing the whys and wherefores of their views upon the subject, that they did not observe Jonathan, whom the noise of the explosion had summoned from the house, until he exclaimed, "Here's a *mettimurphisy*!—here's a *transmigration*!"

His master looked angrily at Jonathan, and demanded what he meant by interrupting him in the middle of a learned discussion.

Jonathan, instead of replying respectfully, as a judicious servant would have done, burst out laughing, and pointed with his finger first at the Squire, then at the Baron, and, lastly, at his master. This, of course, induced the parties pointed at to examine each other, and then themselves. Imagine their horror and amazement. The Squire, who was dressed, as most old English gentlemen were wont to dress of yore, in a blue coat, buff waistcoat, drab sit-upons, and gray silk stockings, saw his blue coat covered with large red spots, his buff vest converted into a dingy brown, his drabs into a sort of yellowy pink, and his grays turned into dapple grays, the very colour of his own carriage horses. The Baron and the Professor, who had been dressed in black, now presented the appearance of Zamiels, as that character is dressed in the Freischütz. The influence of the nitrous fumes had turned the black to a deep but brilliant red!

Jonathan could not give over laughing, although he tried very hard to do so. The Squire tried to join in the laugh, but could not. The Professor was very angry, and harangued his servant on the impropriety of his proceedings; but the Baron, taking a huge pinch of snuff, coolly observed, “ *They vos vare goot acids.*”

What was to be done? The Squire could not walk down to his lodgings to change his dress: the boys would have followed him, huzzaed at him, and probably pelted him, or else have taken him for Mr. Moon, the conjurer. His friend could not supply him with a change by way of loan, for he was a very little thin man, and the Squire tall and stout. As to the Baron, he was located at the Professor's, and of course had only to seek his room and resort to his portmanteau. Jonathan relieved his master's anxiety, by suggesting that a carriage should be procured to convey the Squire to his lodgings. While he was gone to procure it, the Squire's black beaver broad brim began to feel the effects of the nitric and sulphuric acids, and turned as

red as his coat. The Baron suggested the propriety of trying whether an alkali would not neutralize the effect of the acids, and restore the hat to its original nigerity; but, before he and his friend the Professor could agree whether soda or potass was the more compatible alkali to be used, the Star chariot drove up to the gate, and the Squire, having secured the company of the Baron and his friend the Professor of chemistry at dinner, sprang into it, and sat back as far as he could.

He attracted but little attention, until the chariot arrived in the High Street, where its further progress was impeded by a string of vehicles that was waiting to take up their respective burdens as soon as the sermon in aid of the infirmary funds was over: forgetting the "mettimurphisy," and the oddness of his appearance, the Squire let down the windows, and thrust his head out to ascertain the cause of the obstruction. The stoppage unluckily happened just before the door of a celebrated, and justly celebrated, pastry-cook's shop. Now, the shop was full of men who

preferred pastry to preaching, and who were cooling the ardour excited by overnight stimulants and breakfast devilries, and a June sun, with a series of fresh fruit-ices.

“What a quiz!” said one.

“*Quis est?*” inquired another.

“The Pope of Rome, for a penny,” said a third.

“I’ll bet two to one he’s a cardinal; twig his red hat,” said a fourth.

“I’ll take it,” said a fifth; “he’s something military, in a new regulation-hat.”

Several other characters were named, and bets booked to a considerable amount upon the Squire’s being somebody or other; but the heaviest were in favour of his being a foreign ambassador, or the leader of the quadrille band, come down from London to play at the Star ball.

“Here, Horse-Leech,” cried one of the young men. “Come here a minute, if you can leave off flirting with Betsy, and just give us your notion of who and what that very queer character is in the coach.”

“He’s the pope.”

“He’s a cardinal.”

“He’s a foreign count.”

“Only a musician—a mere fiddler.”

“For another pony — I name him—He’s the ambassador from the Red Sea.”

“Who is he, Leech?” said all, at once.

“He is my governor,” said Horatio; “but why he has been metamorphosing himself in that very extraordinary way I cannot conceive.”

“Is he a deputy-lieutenant for Northamptonshire?” asked one man.

“Certainly,” replied Horace.

“Then rely upon it that is the new dress for the character, and I win three ponies, for it’s military.”

The Squire, who had been abusing the driver for not getting on, suddenly found himself the centre of attraction to a large crowd, and, recollecting the queerness of his appearance, popped back into his corner, and endeavoured to hide himself by pulling up the glasses. It was too late, however; a rumour had pervaded the multitude that the

chariot contained some great man, and every one was resolved to have a peep at him.

When the chariot moved on, which it did as soon as Horatio had jumped upon the box and bidden the driver turn round and go by Oriel Lane, and so through Blue Boar Lane, to the lodgings in St. Aldate's, a large crowd followed it which grew gradually larger; and, when the Squire alighted and rushed up to his rooms, he was saluted by loud cries of "Window! window! show yourself at the window," which, of course, he would not do; and so the house was closely beset for the rest of the day, although Horatio explained to some of the people that the occupier of the bootmaker's lodgings was only a country gentleman who had met with an accident which had discoloured his dress.

The Squire would have been very angry, but his wrath was appeased by the thought that his annoyances had been caused in the pursuits of science, and in the presence of the greatest natural philosopher of the age.

Frederick Shoberl, Junior, Printer to His Royal Highness Prince Albert,
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